THE LIFE OF THE PROPHET

[S.A.W.]

By

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CONTENTS

Introduction		5
Chapter 1.	The World on the Eve of the Advent of the Last Prophet	9
Chapter 2.	The Birth of the Prophet and His Early Life	15
Chapter 3.	Begining of the Prophetic Mission	21
Chapter 4.	Public Preaching and Persecution of Muslims	25
Chapter 5.	Social Boycott, Journey to Taif And the Year of Sorrow	33
Chapter 6.	Hopeful Signs from Madinah	37
Chapter 7.	The Hijrah	43
Chapter 8.	Early Life in Madinah	47
Chapter 9.	War Comes at Last	53
Chapter 10.	The Truce of Hudaibiyah and Expansion of Islam	61
Chapter 11.	The Conquest of Makkah	69
Chapter 12.	The Year of Deputations	79

Chapter 13. The Religion is Completed 85

Chapter 14. Islamic Society of Madinah 91

Chapter 15. The Islamic State of Madinah 101

Chapter 16. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) a Model Of Human Character 109

Chapter 17. The Holy Prophet Passes Away 117

Chapter 18. The Greatness of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) 121

Chronology of Events 125

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INTRODUCTION

Reading biography is a fascinating subject. But the biographies of great men are not only fascinating to read, they are also useful in one's practical life. In the words of Longfellow:

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And departing leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Greatness is not a monopoly of any one nation. Every nation has produced and can produce great men. There are however, stages of greatness. One may be great in one respect and the other may be great in another respect. One may be great in character, other in ideas and still another in his great achievements in some particular field. But, there are men, in whom we can find elements of greatness more concentrated than others. Such men can be counted not only among great but among the greatest. They are, in fact, superhuman in one respect.

For us the best specimens to be followed are found in the lives of prophets. It is they in whom humanity reaches its perfection, God gives special attention towards them, guides them and rightly chooses them as his messengers to guide the humanity towards the right path. It is proper, therefore, that we should classify prophets of God among the greatest human beings. It is they in whom elements of greatness are more concentrated than other great men, and it is they who epitomize human perfection, ever conceived by imagination.

All prophets are equal in their greatness in the eye of a Muslim; whether he is Abraham, Moses, Jesus or Muhammad (peace be upon them). The last one however, deserves special prominence. Holy Qur'an calls him the most perfect creation and his life the best specimen to follow. He is the only one in the long line of prophets whose life story can be studied in detail. In the words of John Devenport.

"There is no doubt that among all lawgivers and conquerors there is not a single one whose life story is found in more detail and authenticity than that of Muhammad."[1]

And to quote Bosworth Smith:

"We know less of Zoroaster and Confucius than we do of Solon and Socrates; less of Moses and Buddha than we do of Ambrose and Augustine. We know indeed some fragment of Christ's life, but who can lift the veil of the thirty years that prepared the way for the three-but in Mohammedanism everything is different; here instead of the shadowy and the

[1] John Devenport: *An Apology for Muhammad and Qur'an*, London, 1869.

mysterious we have history...nobody here is the dupe of himself or of others; there is the full light of day."[1]

The impact of the Prophet Muhammad's teachings has been felt throughout the history and even today, these teachings are a great force in moulding the lives of people throught the Muslim World. Thousands of books have been written on the life of great personality during the last thirteen hundred years and are still being written. "The biographers of the Prophet Muhammad" says Professor Margoliouth:

"From a long series it is impossible to end but in which it would be honourable to find a place."

I thank God that my humble name is also included in the long series of the biographers of the Prophet, although this booklet is a minor attempt to portray the life of the greatest man the world has ever seen.

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[1] Bosworth Smith: *Muhammad and Muhammadanism* pp. 14-15.

Chapter: 1

THE WORLD ON THE EVE OF THE ADVENT OF THE LAST PROPHET

The teachings of the prophets of Allah are as old as man himself. When Adam, the first man on the earth and his wife Eve, descended from the heaven, they received the following words from their Creator:

"There shall be for you on earth a habitation and provision for a time... but verily there cometh unto you from Me a guidance; and whose followeth My guidance. There shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve." (Qur'an, 2 : 36–38)

The message of the prophets was very simple, i.e. glory and greatness belongs to Allah, the Creator of universe; that every thing is subordinate to Him, and that we must obey Him. It is, in fact, the teaching of prophets, from which are derived all basic human values and ethical codes. And their teaching is the only source of knowledge of the existence of unseen reality, which has been effecting human life since its beginning whether we feel or realise it or not. They informed us of the fact that there is another life after death–an eternal life, and the enjoyment of this eternal life depends on the deeds performed on this earth. This conception gave us the notion of good and bad and hence this is the main source of what we call universal truths–a common factor in all religions and ethical codes.

The line of prophets is long and their number is innumerable. According to Islamic belief, every nation and every part of the world has been blessed by God with prophets. They all preached the same thing but none of them, including the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), was founder of Islam, as is generally considered by some people. They were messengers of Islam–which is nothing else but to bow before the will of Allah. So according to Islamic belief, the religion of all the prophets was Al-Islam. But with the passage of time the teaching of these prophets were forgotten or altered by the people. And despite the fact that all religions believed in one Supreme God, their followers became polytheists; and this distortion of the ultimate truth paved the way for idol worship and consequently for bowing their heads before natural powers. The man thus, became slave of not only of mortal beings like himself but also of his own desires and passions.

Sixth century is a very important period of human history. By this time all the great religions of the world-Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Brahmanism and Buddhism–had lost their force and enthusiasm. And like the teachings of all the prophets of antiquity, the teachings of the so-called founders of these religions too were altered or distorted. The actual Words of God were allowed to be mixed with human words in the scriptures of these religions, and it had become difficult to find out real truth in the books which they claimed as Books of God.

Sixth century was also the period when people were waiting for a prophet. It is evident from the scriptures of various nations that there was a belief in India, Iran as well as in the world of Judaism and the Christendom, that a prophet would come soon.

Sixth century was also the time when the humanity had reached a high level of intellectual development and people now, were better equipped to rationalize their beliefs rather than to demand super–human feats or miracles from the Prophet to confirm the authenticity of the prophetic mission.

Against this background a man appeared on the world scene with the claim that he was a prophet, a messenger from Allah–the same messenger whom the people were waiting for. He also claimed that he had come to distinguish between right and wrong and to tell the people of the true message of Allah which had been forgotten. He also claimed finality of the prophetic mission.

It is, however, very interesting as well as surprising that this prophet did not make his advent in any civilized and intellectually developed region of the world. He was born in Arabia, a very backward country, cut off from the civilized world by inhospitable deserts. It was a country without a government, divided among hundreds of tribes and clans, which were at daggers drawn with one another. They revelled in adultery and gambling and were greatly addicted to drinking. Loot and plunder was common, and highway robbery was main occupation of a number of tribes. They took pride in murder and vendetta. They would bury their daughters alive lest anyone should become their son-in-law-a relationship considered by some people something very shameful.

Makkah was most respected and famous city of the country. It was the place where was built the first house to worship One God. The people of the Makkah claimed to be the descent of Ismail, the son of the Prophet Ibrahim, who along with his father had rebuilt

Ka'aba on an earlier foundation. But now, these descendants of prophets had associated other deities with Allah. They worshipped stones, trees, stars, spirits and idols, in short everything except Allah. Ka'aba, the House of Allah, itself was turned into a temple of idols consisting 360 so-called gods and goddesses. Because of this total disregard to the Will of God and the uncivilized state of things, this pre-Islam period of Arabia is called "the period of ignorance" in the history. Ignorance, of course, from the message of God, the ultimate truth and reality. Outside Makkah, there were also some Jewish tribes in Northern Arabia, and some Christian communities in the south. These Jews, as well as some of the Christians were waiting for a Messiah to come.

But everything was not wrong with the Arabs. They possessed some noble qualities as well, which were lying dormant because there was no leader among them who could make use of these qualities for a noble cause. They were brave, generous, hospitable, freedom lover, democratic in spirit and firm in their pledges. Their language, to the surprise of all was most polished and developed language of the world as regards its rich vocabulary and eloquency. And most of all to quote an eminent writer, "the Arabs were fresh and virile people. The so-called social progress had produced bad habits among the advanced nations, while among the Arabs no such social organization existed, and they were, therefore, free from the inactivity, debasement and indulgencies arising out of luxuries and sensual satiety. At the same time, however, they did possess a capacity that if some person of extraordinary powers were to invite them for reform and gave them a noble ideal and a complete

programme, they would accept his call and readily rise to act effectively for the achievement of such a goal, and spare no strife or sacrifice in the cause. And verily it was such a young forceful and virile people that were needed for disseminating the teachings of the World Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)."[1]

It was perhaps because of these qualities, that Allah chose Arabia as the place of birth for his last Messenger. Now let us see how the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) faced the situation and brought a miraculous change in the lives of Arabs and how he laid down the foundation of a new civilization which influenced not only the contemporary world but had also a share in the renaissance of Europe – a fact now acknowledged even by many eminent Western writers.

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[1] Abul A'la Maududi: *Towards Understanding Islam.*

Chapter: 2

THE BIRTH OF THE PROPHET AND HIS EARLY LIFE

It was early in the morning of Monday, April 22, 571 A.D., that the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was born in the holy city of Makkah, in Arabia. He belonged to Banu Hashim clan of the famous tribe of Quraish, the guardian of the Holy Ka'aba, and descendent of Prophet Ismail, the son of Prophet Ibrahim. It was Prophet Ibrahim, who along with his son Ismail had rebuilt Ka'aba as a House of Allah on an earlier foundation about four thousand years age. Quraish as the guardian of Ka'aba were respected throughout the Arabian Peninsula.

At that time, Makkah was a city-state with a sort of democratic set-up. Abdul Muttalib, the grandfather of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was the chief of Makkah, and he governed as such for nearly 59 years. He was assisted in the government by the elders–who were the heads of the ten principal families or the clans of the city. Abdul Muttalib had several sons and daughters, among them the youngest was Abdullah, the father of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Abdullh was married to Aamina, a lady of Madina, a city 350 miles north of Makkah, and which at that time was called Yathreb. Abdullah, however, did not live long after the marriage. He was only 25 years old that he fell ill and died at Madina. His wife Aamina, was

expecting a child at that time. And a few days after the death of Abdulah, she gave-birth to a son – noble son, who was destined to become a prophet. His grandfather named him Muhammad (pbuh), an Arabic word meaning the praised one. And the world has seen that Muhammad (pbuh) really became the most praised up personality the world has ever known.

In those days, the well-to-do people of Makkah used to send their babies away to be nursed by women in the country. So a few days after the birth, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) too, was entrusted to a woman of Banu Sa'ad clan, named Halima. Halima nursed and took care of this baby with such love and affection that the Prophet always remembered his foster-mother. He showed great respect for her whenever she came to him. When she came for the first time, after the declaration of his mission as a Prophet, he stood up in her respect and embraced her spontaneously with a cry: 'Oh my mother, my mother.' The Prophet was also proud of his being nursed among Banu Sa'ad, who were famous for their eloquency and chaste language. The Prophet used to say, "I am most eloquent of you all as I am from the tribe of Quraish and my language is that of Banu Sa'ad."

Halima and her husband Harith were fortunate to survive so long that Muhammad (pbuh) was blessed by Allah with the prophet-hood. Both of them then embraced Islam.

The Prophet remained for four years among the people of Banu Sa'ad, under the care of Halima. Then his mother took him under her own care. Two years later Aamina went to Yathreb to visit her husband's grave. Muhammad (pbuh) was with him. After staying for one month in Madina she returned but died on her

way back to Makkah. Thus Muhammad (pbuh) at the age of six was left without his father and mother. Now Abdul Muttalib took care of his grandson. But he was a very old man. Hardly two years had passed that he also died, at a ripe age of eighty-two years.

After the death of Abdul Muttalib, the responsibility of bringing up the child fell on the shoulders of his uncle, Abu Talib, the son of Abdul Muttalib. From this time on, for forty years Abu Talib remained a constant companion and a pillar of strength to the Prophet. He was as loving as a father. He always kept his nephew with him and never left him alone. The fortune of the family however, declined after Abdul Muttalib; and the leadership of Makkah was transferred to the rival clan of Banu Umayya, called in English as Omayyads.

We know very little about Prophet's early life. But the scant information which we have is enough to form an idea about his character. We know that he was a boy of serious nature he did not play with the boys of streets, kept himself aloof from idolatry and never took wine. His character was exemplary. He was simple human, and straight-forward. He would never tell lie or use dishonest means in any way. Because of his honesty and truthfulness, he had earned the title of Sadiq (the truthful) and Amin (the trusty).

During his boyhood, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) worked for some time as a shepherd boy. Then he took to trade, which was his family profession. In this connection he occasionally went on trade journeys to places as far as Syria and Yemen. In the beginning, he accompanied his uncle in these journeys and then he went alone. It was one of such journeys that a noble and wealthy woman of Makkah was impressed by his

character and honesty and offered herself to marry him. The story goes:

There was a noble and wealthy woman in Makkah named Khadija. She was perhaps, the wealthiest woman in the city. According to the practice of those days she used to send her merchandise to far off lands; and this merchandise of Khadija alone was equal to those of the collected merchandise of the rest of Quraish. On hearing the honesty of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) she once offered him to send her merchandise through him to Syria. The Prophet accepted the offer and went to Syria accompanied by the lady's slave Maisara. When Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) returned from Syria with great profits, this slave told his mistress of the honesty and fair dealings of the Prophet. And she was so much impressed by the character of the young Muhammad (pbuh) that she offered herself to marry him. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), with the consent of his uncle agreed to the proposal and marriage was solemnized soon after. It is interesting here to note that the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) at this time was a young man of 25 years, whereas, Khadija was 40 years old and a widow. She had two sons and one daughter from former husbands. But Khadija, was a lady of noble character; and the people used to call her Tahira – which means in Arabic chaste and virtuous.

Khadija proved a very helping and loving wife. After the marriage she gave all her wealth and her slaves at the disposal of her husband. Although the Prophet at once set all the slaves free, the wealth of his wife was of great assistance in the years to come. In fact her love, and her wealth, all were devoted to her husband and the Prophet used to remember her even

after her death with love throughout his life. He used to say:

"When I was poor she enriched me and when they called me a liar, she supported my mission."

Historians mention two important events of the period before the beginning of the Prophetic Mission, in which Muhammad (pbuh) participated. As a result of tribal wars, which were very common in those days in Arabia, thousands of people had become destitute and the peace was totally disturbed. When people realized the after effects of these wars they entered into a peace pact. They pledged that they would keep peace in the land, would protect travelers and would provide assistance to needy and poors. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was among the people who had signed the pledge. In fact, the Prophet was by his nature a human and peace loving person. Once before this pledge, which is known as Half-al-Fazul, he had to take part in a tribal war but, he did not use his sword in this battle too. So, when the above mentioned pledge or pact was signed he welcomed it. He was indeed so much impressed by the human aspect of the pledge that even after the beginning of his prophetic mission he used to say that he was still prepared to participate if he was invited by anyone to include in such a pact.

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) not only hated war, but he, during these days, actually removed a great danger of imminent tribal war by his ingenuity. The building of Ka'aba was constructed anew after knocking down the old one, which was damaged by floods. After the completion of the building quarrel arose over the issue of placing the sacred Black Stone (Hajar-e-Aswad) in its place. The building was constructed with the help of all tribes and now every

tribe wanted to have the honour of putting the Black Stone in its place, itself. Some of the rash and head-stong man had even dipped their fingers in the bowl of blood which meant that they would lay down their lives than discard their right. At last, by a strange chance, the young Muhammad (pbuh) was agreed as arbitrator. He put the Black Stone on a cloth sheet and suggested that every claimant and the chiefs of different tribes should raise the stone to the required height. When this was done he himself lifted the stone and put it at the proper place. Thus he saved his people from the horrors and devastations of a sure and bloody war.

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Chapter: 3

BEGINNING OF THE PROPHETIC MISSION

For fifteen years after the marriage, the Prophet led a life which won him the love and respect, not only of his wife but also of his town-folk. But as he grew old he used to spend most of his time in solitude and in meditation. He used to go to a mountain cave called Hira, three miles from Makkah. There he spent his time in prayer and meditation. He was in search of truth, as he was not satisfied with the beliefs and habits of his people. Idolatry, dishonesty, murder, civil strife, gambling, robbery, usury and drinking of wine were common in those days as said before. But the Prophet did not indulge in any of them, as these evils were foreign to his nature. He was perhaps seeking God's help to show him a right and straight path to tread. He spent weeks and months in the cave, praying and meditating. At last a revolution came in his life. One night, in the month of Ramadan, 609 A.D., when he was praying in the cave he heard a voice of an angel saying:

"Read."

"I cannot read", the Prophet answered. The angel then took him and squeezed him vehemently and then let him go. But the Prophet again said "I cannot read". The angel squeezed him again and in a voice more terrible, commanded: "Read". The Prophet then replied, "What can I read?" The angel then said:

"Read in the name of thy Lord who createth. Created man from a clot. Read: And thy Lord is the Most Bounteous, Who teacheth by pen, teacheth men which he knew not." (Qur'an, 96: 106)

The Prophet did as he was asked to do; and the words remained "as if inscribed upon his heart". He went out of the cave on to the hillside and heard the same awe-inspiring voice say:

"Oh Muhammad (pbuh)! Thou art Allah's messenger, and I am Gabriel". Then he raised his eyes and saw the angel, in the likeness of a man, standing in the sky above the horizon. And again the dreaded voice said: "Oh Muhammad (pbuh)! Thou art Allah's messenger and I am Gabriel".

Muhammad (pbuh) stood quiet still, turning away his face from the brightness of the vision; but withersoever, he might turn his face, there always stood the angel confronting him. He remained thus a long time till at length the angel disappeared.

The Prophet could not understand the mystery of his revelation and was rather frightened. He has tily came back to his home in great distress of mind and told the whole story to his wife Khadija. She did her best to reassure him saying. "Your conduct has been such that Allah would not let a harmful spirit come to you, you are kind to your family, you help the helpless, you welcome guests, and you ass'st those who are in trouble." Then Khadija took him to her cousin "Warqa bin Naufel', a very old man, who knew the scriptures of the Jews and Cristians. He declared his belief that the same angel Gabriel who came to Moses of old, had come to Muhammad (pbuh), and that he was chosen as the Prophet. Addressing to the Prophet he also added "I am sorry I am so old. I wish I were younger and

could see the day when God will make you a guide to men. Yet I fear that your people will drive you away from your home."

These words of Warqa gave Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) needed solace. Gabriel too appeared before him on a number of occasions and assured him that he was chosen by Allah as His prophet, in order to bring the strayed people on the right and straight path. From now onward, the Prophet's mission was to inform people of Allah's message. But what this message was?

It was simple and clear, i.e. to bow before the Will of Allah, Who is One and Peerless, the fountain head of all truths. Anyone who did not admit the existence of God or believes in the polytheism is a rebel. This was the true and real religion of Adam, the first man, of Abraham, of Moses and of Jesus. To be more correct it was the religion of all the prophets sent by Allah is every nook and corner of the world. But with the passage of time the people interpreted this message according to their own leanings and desires, mixed their own words with the words of God and thus the scriptures given to different prophets became unreliable. The true message of Allah became obscure and the people strayed from the right path. The mission of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) now was to revive this teaching of the prophets and to restore the original truth.

The belief in one God, however, does not mean only lip service to God. It also entails God obedience. That is why, the name of this apparently new religion was given Islam, the religion of obedience, peace and security.

As almost all the people of Makkah were idolators in those days, it was a very difficult matter to preach a doctrine which was contrary to their belief. So the Prophet started his mission from his own house. It is said by Voltair, the famous French writer that no one can become hero of his own house. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), however, became the hero of his house. His life was so clean, his character was so blotless and his manners were so endearing that he was heartliy liked by his family. Therefore, when he presented his teaching to his wife she accepted them at once without any hesitation. His cousin Ali, son of Abu Talib, a boy of only about ten years also entered the fold of Islam, Prophet's dearest friend Abu Bakr and the Prophet's slave Zaid were also among the first ones, who accepted Islam. Abu Bakr was also instrument in bringing into the fold of Islam some of the personalities, who later on played an important role in the history of Islam. Usman who later on became the third caliph; Sa'ad bin Waqqas, who conquered Iraq; Zubair, Abdur Rahman bin Auf and Talha who played an outstanding role in the early history of Islam all were persuaded by Abu Bakr to enter the fold of Islam. The preaching, however, remained confined to most trusted men and even prayer was offered secretly. After three years of continuous efforts more than forty men embraced Islam. Islamic movement had taken roots in the idolatrous soil of Makkah. The religion of Ibrahim and Islmail was revived.

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Chapter: 4

PUBLIC PREACHING AND PERSECUTION OF MUSLIMS

After three years of secret preaching, words came from Allah, to invite the people publicly towards the right path. So the Prophet went to a hill in the city known as Safa and asked people to gather around him. When the people did so he asked them;

> "Would you believe me if I tell you that a large army was hidden behind this hill ready to attack you." The people replied that they would certainly believe him because they had not even heard him telling a lie. Then the Prophet said, "Well if you think so I ask you to believe in one God, and if you refuse to do so God will give you severe punishment."

When people heard this warning they got angry and disturbed. They could not tolerate insult to the idols whom they had been worshipping for generation as gods. They, therefore, scattered one by one laughing and joking and the Prophet remained alone.

The Holy Prophet began his mission with the defence of monotheism i.e. belief in one Allah and rejection of polytheism and idol worship. His mission, however, did not remain confined to this alone. It gradually took the shape of a movement against all social evils and false beliefs. He vindicated his mission and the missions of earlier prophets forcefully. He urged people not to indulge in adultery and crimes, and refrain from stealing, robbery, falsehood, killing of

children and other immoral acts. He warned the people against the day of Judgement, when all men and women will have to give account of their deeds. In short, his struggle was a call to create a new society, free from all evils and exploitations, on the basis of Divine guidance. These ideas and restrictions were not acceptable to the Makkahns, particularly, to those belonged to high classes and held monopoly in every walk of life. In accepting Islam they saw the end of their monopoly and unbridled freedom. They, therefore, tried to oppose the new movement with all their might.

Henceforth the Prophet's life is a record of ceaseless struggle for years in face of bitterest opposition. His preachings evoked a furious outburst of persecution against him and devoted followers. Once, when he proclaimed the unity of God in the courtyard of Ka'aba, an uproar started and the non believers attacked him. One of his followers Harith bin Abi Hala ran to protect him, but was killed by the attackers. This was the first bloodshed in the way of Islam.

Unbelievers used different methods of torture to force Muslims to give up their belief in one God. For instance, Usman's hands and legs were tied up with a rope by his uncle, who locked him up in a room saying that he would not let him go out till he had given up his new faith. Usman was also beaten by his uncle with ropes. Another Muslim, Zubair was locked up in a room which was filled with smokes, with the result that Zubair almost fainted. Likewise when Abu Zar a new convert announced his Islam in the courtyard of Ka'aba, he was severely beaten.

Slaves were the main targets of Makkahn's cruelty. The Abyssinian slave Bilal, was made to lie down by his master on the burning sand of the Arabian desert at noon. Then a rock was placed on his breast so that he could not move. His master warned him that if he did not discard Islam this torture would continue. When this inhuman method failed to bring desired result his neck was tied by a rope and the boys were asked to drag him from one corner of the town to the other. Bilal in spite of this unbearable hardship stuck to his faith with these words on his lips: "God is one".

Another slave Khabbab, was made to lie down on the burning coals till the melted fat of the body cooled down the coals. Ammar bin Yasir, also a slave was beaten so much by his master that he would become unconscious. His father Yasir, too was treated in the same way and his mother Sumayya was pierced to death by a lance by Abu Jehl the chief of non-believers and the arch enemy of Islam.

These slaves however, brave all this torture and hardships and did not give up their faith in one God. In fact conviction in Islam was so strong among the followers of the Prophet that they were ready to go under any hardship and sacrifice. The Christian author Godfrey Magnus was right when he said, that the early followers of Jesus Christ were lacking in the religious fervour found in the followers of Muhammad (pbuh). When Christ was taken to gallows they ran away leaving their prophet alone. On the other hand, the followers of Muhammad (pbuh) rallied round their prophet, risked their lives to save him and in the end made him victorious on his enemies.[1]

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[1] Siratunnabi by Shibli Numani, Vol. 1. P.233

The truth of the Prophet's message and the conviction of his followers was, however, having its effect on non-believers; and the number of believers in Islam was gradually increasing. Among the important converts of these early days of trials and tribulation were Hamza, the paternal uncle of the Prophet and Umar. He was among great enemies of Islam, but after accepting the new faith; played an unparalled led role in the history of Islam.

The Makkahns did not spare even the Holy Prophet. Once he was praying in Ka'aba, Abu Jehl put the dirty foetus of a camel on his neck. They use to throw thorny branches in his way so that when he went to Ka'aba in the darkness of night he was hurt. Once when the Prophet was praying, a man threw a piece of cloth round his neck and pulled it tight to strangulate him to death. The Prophet was only saved when Abu Bakr ran to help him saying, "Do you want to kill a man just because he says that God is his Lord?"

When the Prophet saw that the life has become too hard and unbearable for the Muslims, he advised them to migrate to Abyssinia, which was ruled by a Christian king called Negus or Najashi, known for his tolerance. So, in the fifth year of the Prophethood two groups of one hundred and seventeen Muslims including women migrated to Abyssinia.

When Makkahns heard that Muslims have taken refuge in Abyssinia, they sent their envoys to the court of Negus with gifts. These envoys asked the king to hand over Muslims to them so that they might be put to death for discarding their old religion. The king sent for the Muslims and asked them whether the charge was true. At this moment Jafar bin Abu Talib, the cousin of the Prophet came forward and said:

"O king, we were plunged in the depths of ignorance and barbarism; we adored idols, and we lived in unchastity; we ate dead bodies and we spoke abominations; we disregarded all humane feelings, as also the duties of hospitality and neighbourliness; we knew no law but that of strong. Then Allah raised up amongst us a man whose birth, truthfulness, honesty and purity were well known to us. He called us to the unity of God and taught us not to associate anything with Him; he forbade us the worship of idols and enjoined us to speak truth, to be faithful to our trusts, to be merciful and to regard the rights of our neighbours. He forbade us to speak evil of women, or to eat the substance of orphans; he ordered us to fly from vices and to abstain from evil, to offer prayers, to render alms, to observe fast. We have believed in him; we have accepted his teachings and his injuctions to worship Allah and not to associate anything with Him. For this reason our people have risen against us, have persecuted us in order to make us forgo the worship of Allah and to return to the worship of idols of wood and stone and other abominations. They Makkahns have tortured us and injured us until, finding no safety among them, we came to your country and hope you will protect us from their oppressions.[1]

Jafar also recited some verses from the Qur'an, which impressed the king so much that he said, "By God, this Qur'an and Bible are the light of the same lamp." The king then addressed to the Makkahn's envoys and refused to hand over Muslims to them, because he thought that they were innocent and oppressed. When the Makkahns saw that they are

[1] Abdul Hameed Siddiqui: The Life of Muhammad, P. 95-96 (Lahore, 1969) quoted from The Spirit of Islam by Syed Amir Ali, PP. 29-30.

losing the case they made another attempt next day; and now they tried to provoke the religious sentiments of the king. They came to the court and asked the king:

"Do you know what belief these Muslims have about the Christ?

To ascertain their views in this respect, the king again called for the Muslims. This was very critical time as the king was a Christian, and as such believed in the divinity of Christ, which was contrary to the Muslims' belief of one God. Jafar, however, again frankly explained the Islamic point of view in this respect, He said:

"Jesus is the slave of God, is His prophet and the word of God. When Negus heard this he lifted a straw and said that you are right and Jesus is not more than this straw of what you have said."

Thus the Makkahn's envoys returned home disappointed; and Muslims lived in Abyssinia peacefully for many years. In the meantime a number of Abyssinians also embraced Islam.

Whilst his disciples were seeking shelter in distant lands, the Prophet remained steadfast at his post. His relatives like Ali and Hamza and friends like Abu Bakr and Umar were with him. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) undeterred by the cruelties to which he was subjected, preached unceasingly amongst the Makkahns and the outsiders who come to the city on business or pilgrimage. He told them of the day of reckoning when the deeds done by man in this world shall be weighed before the Eternal Judge, when the children who had been buried alive shall be asked for what crime they had been put to death, and when

heaven and earth shall be folded up and none be heard but God.

The Makkahns adopted different methods to force the Prophet stop preaching Islam. Abu Talib, as has been told before, was a pillar of strength for the Prophet. Now the Makkahns tried to deprive the Prophet of this support. A delegation came to Abu Talib and asked him to stop his nephew from preaching. They warned Abu Talib that either he should not come in their way or be prepared for the consequences. Abu Talib had not accepted Islam, but even then he had never interfered in his nephew's mission either. But now the combined warning of the Makkahns had created a critical situation for him. So he went to the Prophet and said to him.

"My dear, do not burden me to the extent that I may not bear it."

To this the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) replied:

"If you place the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand, I will not stop preaching my mission. I will continue in this way till I succeed or die."

Abu Talib was so much impressed by this reply and conviction of his nephew that he did not utter a word in reply and allowed the Prophet to do what he wanted. He said:

"Do as you think fit. No one shall harm you as long as I am alive."

Disappointed in this design too, the Makkahns then offered temptation to the Prophet. Their leader, Utbah came to the Prophet and said:

"If you want money, we will give you any amount of it. If you want a beautiful wife, we promise to give

you the most beautiful woman in the land. If it is power that you are after, we are ready to make you our king. Choose any or all of these things and you will have them. But for God's sake give up your mission."

The Prophet did not reply Utbah, instead of that he recited these verses from Qur'an:

"Ha Mim. A revelation from the Beneficent, the Merciful, a Scripture whereof the verses are expounded, a Lecture in Arabic for people who have knowledge. Good tidings and a warning. But of them turn away so that they hear not. And they say: Our hearts are protected from that unto which thou (O Muhammad PBUH) callest us, and in our ears there is a deafness, and between us and thee there is a veil. Act, then. Lo. We also shall be acting."

(Qur'an, 41:1-5)

When Utbah heard these verses from Qur'an, he became dumb founded. He went back to his men and said:

"The verses which Muhammad (pbuh) recites is not poetry, it is something else. In my opinion it is better to leave him to his fate."

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Chapter: 5

SOCIAL BOYCOTT, JOURNEY TO TAIF AND THE YEAR OF SORROW

Struggle of Holy Prophet against idol worship and polytheism continued in spite of all obstructions and oppressions. He did not lose heart for a moment. Convinced of the truth of his message he went on preaching and admonishing the unbelievers of Makkah. His efforts were not altogether fruitless. The number of his followers was increasing slowly but steadily.

Seeing the determination of the Prophet and the gradual success of his mission, the unbelievers now prepared a dreadful plan to kill the Holy Prophet. In those days of tribal prejudices, it was very dangerous to kill a man belonging to a certain tribe. Such an action was to be retaliated by the tribe of the man killed. And this might incite war not only between the two tribes involved but also between the supporters and allies of each tribe. The tribe of Banu Hashim – to which Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) belonged – was small but influential tribe. And although a large section of the tribe was still unbeliever, Banu Hashim were united against their opponents; and any attempt to kill the Prophet was bound to be retaliated by the whole tribe.

To forestall this danger of tribal war, all the tribes of Makkah entered into an agreement, under which

they decided to cut off all dealings with Banu Hashim, unless they handed over the Prophet to the unbelievers to get him murdered. It was decided that no one was to sell anything to Banu Hashim, nor would he keep any relation with them. Even food and water would not be allowed to reach them. This agreement was signed by the heads of all tribes, as a precautionary measure against retaliation, and was hanged upon the Ka'aba as a sacred document.

This boycott of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and Banu Hashim was so complete that they were all obliged to leave the city and take refuge in a mountain pass about three miles from Makkah now known as Shaeb-e-Abi Talib or the Pass of Abu Talib, For three years from 617 to 619 the Prophet, his relatives and other believers lived there, facing all kinds of hardships. As supplies from all sides were cut off, they often had to live for day's on leaves and bark of trees, causing harm to stomach and body. So cruel were the non-believers that they used to laugh when voices of babies, crying in hunger, reached their ears.

At length some kind hearted men among non-believers grew weary of the boycott of old friends and neighbours. They became ashamed of their inhuman act. They managed to have the document, which had been placed in the Ka'aba, brought out for reconsideration; when it was found that all the writings had been destroyed by white ants, except the words Bismika Allahumma (in thy name of Allah). When unbelievers saw that marvel, the ban was removed; and the Prophet and his family were again free to go to the city.

The Year of Sorrow

No soner the Prophet was free to move about, he suffered another blow. His beloved uncle Abu Talib who had proved a shield to him against the enemies so far, died soon after, and within a week after this, his beloved wife, his great helpmate, Khadija (blessings of Allah be upon her) also passed away. Because of these two unfortunate events Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) used to say this tenth year of the Prophethood or 619 A.D. as the year of sorrow.

When the Prophet lost his great supporter in the person of Abu Talib, the misbehaviour and rowdyism of the unbelievers with Prophet became more harsh and severe. During the next three years he passed through the hardest period of his mission. In addition to unmannerly acts, the people of Makkah also adopted another method to discourage him from preaching his mission. They decided not to listen his message at all. When they saw him coming they would disperse here and there, leaving the Prophet alone. This method of non-cooperation was so complete that one day Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) roamed through all the streets and lanes of the city but found none who would listen his words. The doors for the success of Islamic teachings were now practically closed in Makkah.

Journey to Taif

Soon after the death of his beloved wife and uncle, the Prophet decided to go to some other place where people might listen to his message favourably. He, therefore, accompanied with his attendant, Zaid bin Harith, left Makkah for Taif, an important town about forty miles from Makkah. But the chiefs and the people of this town proved more hostile and cruel than

the Makkahns. When the Holy Prophet told the prominent chiefs of Taif of his message, they instead of paying attention to it, laughed at him and ridiculed his message. Not so much only but they set fall their dogs upon him and ordered the urchins of the street to laugh at him and to pelt him with stones. These urchins thus drove the Holy Prophet out of the town. The Holy Prophet was badly injured by stones and so much blood flowed down from his body and the injured ankles that his shoes were filled with it. His servant Zaid, losing his patience at this brutal treatment by the people of Taif, asked the Holy Prophet to curse them. But the Holy Prophet (pbuh) who has always been merciful to the mankind, refused to do so. Instead of cursing the people he prayed for them. He said, "Oh my Lord, forgive these people, for they know not." He also told Zaid that though the present generation is not ready to have faith in one God, one day their descendents would certainly worship one and only God. Thus forced to leave Taif, the Prophet again returned to his native city, Makkah.

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Chapter: 6

HOPEFUL SIGNS FROM MADINAH

After coming back to Makkah, the Holy Prophet did not remain idle. In spite of all failures and difficulties, he carried on with his mission as usual. Wherever he saw a few men sitting together, he would go to them and tell them of his message. He would tell them that there was only one God; and that he had neither son nor daughter. He would say that people must put their trust in Him and pray only to Him. The Prophet would particularly take the opportunity to preach his message when different fairs were held in and around Makkah. He also visited different tribes in this connection. Abu Lahab and Abu Jehl and other arch enemies of Islam, usually accompanied him in his journeys; and whenever, the Holy Prophet tried to address the people, they would say, "He is a liar and has discarded the religion of his forefathers." Some would say that he had gone mad and some others, feeling the magic spell of Qur'an, would say that he was a poet or magician.

But the people now were gradually realising that the Holy Prophet was neither a liar, nor had he gone mad, and that he was not even a poet or a magician. Once there was a gathering of tribal chiefs in Makkah. The subject of their discussion was the Holy Prophet. One of the chief Nazar bin Harith said, "Muhammad (pbuh) has passed his childhood and youth before you. He was the most desired, true and trustworthy man

among you. Now when his hairs are growing white and he told about his message before you, you say that he is a magician, sorcerer, poet and a mad man. By God, I have heard his speech and no such things can be attributed to him."

Although the tenth year after the Revelation is known as the year of sorrow, it was also a year of hope. It was this year that hopeful signs appeared on the northern horizon. The message of Islam had reached the far–flung city of Madinah, where people were more inclined towards the new religion.

The people of Madinah or Yathrib, as it was called in those days, were like other Arabs, idolaters. But there were also many Jews settled in and around the city. These Jews were the people of Scriptures, i.e. they possessed books of Allah revealed to earlier prophets. These Jews were waiting for a prophet, who was soon to come according to their books. Their religious teachers, who are called ribbies, had often spoken to the pagans of Madinah about the advent of this prophet; with whom, when he came, Jews would destroy the pagans.

In the meantime, the echo of the Holy Prophet's message had also reached Madinah. Swaid bin Samit, a prominent Arab poet of Madinah, had already heard and praised the verses of Qur'an, which the Holy Prophet had recited before him during one of his visit to Makkah. Ayas bin Muaz – a member of the delegation sent by the tribe of Aus to seek alliance of Quraish against their rival tribe Khazraj – was another Madinite who had heard the message of Islam from the lips of the Holy Prophet. In brief, the people of Madinah were, unconsciously ready to accept the new faith. And when the men from Yathreb, saw

Muhammad (pbuh) they recognised him as the same Prophet the Jewish ribbies had described to them.

It was customary with the Holy Prophet to preach among different tribes during the Haj season, when people from all parts of Arabia gathered at Makkah. It was during one such occasion that the Prophet saw a group of men from Yathreb, near a place called Aqabah. When the Holy Prophet invited them to accept Islam, they began to see one another and then said to each other. "Let us accept Islam, lest the Jews might take a lead over us." And all of them – they were six in number – accepted Islam without hesitation. This was a great success for Islam, after a long and hard time. And what is more important, it also paved the way for great success. The next year twelve people came from Yathrib and accepted Islam before the Holy Prophet. As Islam had already made way among the inhabitants of Yathreb during the last one year, this second group of the Yathrebites asked the Prophet to send some-one with them to give Islamic instruction to the new converts. The Holy Prophet on their request sent Mus'ab bin Umair, an early companion of the Prophet, with them to Yathreb. After the arrival of Mus'ab in Yathreb, Islam began to spread with great speed and hardly a day passed that one or two men did not accept Islam. To crown the success, Saad bin Mu'az, the head of the influential tribe of Aus, entered the fold of Islam on the invitation of Mus'ab bin Umair.

Indeed Islam had worked miracle. After thirteen years of persecution and suffering a new era was emerging in the history of Islam. This sudden change was surprising but not unexpected. The people of Yathreb were silent spectators of all the events in

Makkah. They were not unaware of the sufferings and sacrifices of Muslims for the cause of Islam. The steadfastness of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his devoted followers was having its effect on the minds of people who were not in direct clash with them. And when they saw that the Prophet and his followers are facing all kinds of oppression cheerfully, they (people of Yathreb) bowed their heads before the noble teachings of Allah, which had inspired the followers of Islam to undergo such sufferings and sacrifices, unparalleled in the history of human race.

Islam had found a new home in Yathreb. It was but natural that the Muslims of Yathreb should invite the Holy Prophet to live among them and work from this citadel for the glory of Islam. Therefore, when next season of Haj began, seventy-two Muslims from Yathreb went for Haj. They after reaching Makkah, requested the Prophet on behalf of the Muslims of Yathreb, to come and settle in their city. Abbas, the uncle of the Prophet–who had not accepted Islam as yet – was present at that time. On hearing this request he warned the members of the yathreb delegation of the consequences of such a decision. "If you want to take the Prophet with you," he said, "You must promise to stand by him to the last moment, otherwise leave him here." Addressing to the Prophet the members of the delegation replied, "We are born and brought up under the shadow of swords, however, we too want your assurance that when you have gained power you should not leave us and come back to Makkah."

The Prophet smiled at this and said, "Your blood is my blood, you are mine and I am yours." He also suggested that the time had not yet come for him to

leave Makkah, but he would come later on, if Allah so willed. At this moment, the Holy Prophet also asked them to promise that they would not worship anyone except Allah, and would refrain from stealth, adultery, killing of children and false imputation. The Prophet by taking such pledge, laid the foundation of a new and exemplary society in Yathreb.

All these discussions and pledges took place in complete secrecy.

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Chapter: 7

THE HIJRAH

Islam had now found an asylum in Yathreb. It was easy for the Prophet to move to this new city. But he was not the first man to go there. He was waiting for the words of Allah in this respect. In the meanwhile he advised other Muslims of Makkah to migrate to Yathreb. Muslims on this advice started migrating to that city one by one; and in a few months, almost all of them reached Yathreb. Only the Holy Prophet, his friend Abu Bakr, his cousin Ali and a few other Muslims, particularly those who could not afford to go there, because of one reason or other, remained in Makkah.

This escape of almost all Muslims to Yathreb, and the fact that Islam had found a stronghold there, was very disturbing for the Makkahns. They were now made after revenge. A meeting of all the chiefs of different tribes was held in Makkah to deal with the new situation. Different proposals were presented, but one proposed by Abu Jehl was adopted. He proposed that one man from each tribe should be selected, and then all of them with swords in their hands should attack the Holy Prophet. Thus no particular tribe could be blamed for the murder, and Banu Hashim would not be able to face the combined strength of the tribes involved in murder.

So, to put their nefarious design into action, the Makkahns, in the dark of one night, surrounded the

house of the Prophet. As the act of violating the privacy of a house was considered bad even by the Arabs of the days of ignorance, they remained standing outside the house. Their plan was to attack the Prophet in the early morning, when he used to go out for the prayer.

It has been mentioned before that the Holy Prophet was waiting for the words from Allah to migrate. Now he had received these words and making preparation to leave Makkah in the same night in which the Makkahns sat in ambush to assasainate him. As people were used to deposit their money and belongings with the Prophet, he thought it proper to return their deposits before his departure to yathreb. But there was no time left, and he had to entrust this task to his cousin Ali, who was living with the Prophet in his house. Ali was told to sleep that night on the Prophet's bed. He too was to follow the Prophet to Yathreb, after he had given back to the owners their belongings. When considerable part of the night passed, the Prophet trusting in the protecting hand of Allah, walked out of his house quietly, leaving the Makkahns unaware.

The Prophet went straight to the house of his friend Abu Bakr, who was to accompany him to Yethreb. To be forced to leave one's native city is not a happy affair. The Prophet was born and bred in Makkah and had spent 53 years of his life in that city. So, when he passed by the Ka'aba he looked dejectedly towards it and said, "Makkah, thou art dearest to me than the whole world, but thy sons do not want me to live here." When he reached the house of Abu Bakr, he told him of his plans. Now the Holy Prophet and Abu Bakr began their journey towards

Yathreb. Their first stop was a cave called Thaur three miles from Makkah. Here the Prophet stayed for three days. Asma, the daughter of Abu Bakr used to send food there secretly from her house in Makkah.

When the Makkahns woke up in the morning, they realized their negligence, and entered the Prophet's house instantly. They were surprised to see Ali on the bed instead of the Prophet. They took Ali into custody for a while, then let him go. Now a careful search for the Prophet was made everywhere. A reward of one hundred camels was announced for the man who would bring the Prophet and his friend Abu Bakr in chains. A hot pursuit was started and a party of Makkahns, following the footprints of the Prophet's camel came very near to the cave. Abu Bakr expressed his anxiety at this; but the Prophet remained calm and quiet and said:

"Do not fear, Allah is with us."

On the fourth day the search was given up. The Prophet now came out of the cave and started his journey towards Yathreb. The inhabitants of Yathreb, were anxiously waiting for the arrival of the Prophet. On 12th Rabiul Awwal (June 28, 622 A.D.) he reached at Qaba, an outskirt of Yathreb; here the people welcomed him with the cries of Allah-o-Akbar. The Prophet stayed at Qaba for fourteen days. He built a mosque there and took part as a labourer in its construction. Ali also Joined the Prophet at Qaba.

When the Prophet, after a stay of fourteen days, left Qaba for Yathreb, the people were standing on both sides of the road to welcome him, all along the three mile route. As he reached near the town, the women climbed on the roofs of their houses and started singing songs in the Prophet's praise. When the

Prophet, who always loved children, saw this delightful scene, he, with a smiling face, asked the girls.

"Do you like me?"

"Yes", was their reply.

"I too like you", said the Prophet.

The Prophet had now reached his destination, With all his followers, safe and secure. The Muslims were now free to worship and obey one and only God. With this migration which is known in Islamic history as Hijrah, came to an end the hardest period of the life of the Prophet. It also marked the end of trials and tribulations and persecution of the followers of Islam, who remained faithful to their creed and their leader to the last, and faced all kinds of atrocities with a courage unparalleled in the history of human race. Edward Gibbon, the great English historian has correctly remarked that "no one had ever put his followers to such a strict trial as Muhammad (pbuh) did his followers."

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Chapter : 7

EARLY LIFE IN MADINAH

Hijrah to Yathreb marks a new chapter in the history of Islam as well as in the life of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Muslims had found an asylum and a stronghold, where they were free to practice their religion and to defend it from enemy's assaults. A new life and a new society was now in the process of making. Now the Prophet was not only a preacher, giving warnings to the non-believers and guidance to the individual souls, but has become a teacher, a law-giver and a reformer as well, giving guidance to a growing social and political community of Yathreb, the name of which was now changed to Madinatunnabi (the city of the Prophet), later on popularly known in its abbreviated form as Madinah, meaning 'the city'.

The first act of the Prophet in Madinah was to build a mosque for the worship of Allah. The mosque known as the Masjid-e-Nabavi (the mosque of the Prophet) was completed within few months after the arrival of the Prophet. In its construction the Prophet himself worked as a labourer, as he had already done in Qaba, vindicating the dignity of labour. The mosque was not a palatial building of stone and bricks. It was a simple and modest structure made of unbaked bricks and wood. The roof consisted of date tree's leaves. The floor was unpaved in the beginning, but was later on paved with stones. This modest edifice gradually

became a centre of all activities – religious, academic, social and political – in Madinah.

The mosque was constructed in the month of Rabi I of the first year of Hijrah. Azan, the method of calling Muslims to prayer was however, introduced next year. Another important change that occurred in Madinah was the decision to change Qiblah (the place toward which the Muslims turn their faces in prayer). Till now, Muslims when praying, used to keep their faces toward Jerusalem. But now Shaban 2 Hijrah they were ordered by Allah to turn their faces toward Ka'abah in Makkah, which is the first House of Allah on the earth, and built by Prophet Ibrahim.

The migrants or Muhajireen, as they are called in the Islamic history, had lost all their belongings in Makkah. As everything was snatched from them in Makkah, they were almost destitute and needed help. To overcome this problem, the Holy Prophet established a new system of brotherhood. Under this system every Muhajir was declared a brother of one or other inhabitant of Madinah, who were now given the name of Ansar, meaning the helpers. Such was the love of Ansar with the Muhajireen, that when this system of brotherhood was established, every Ansar actually gave half of his belongings and property to his Muhajir brother. Thus the Muslims of Makkah, who had undergone great sacrifices for the cause of Islam – were successfully absorbed in the collective life of Madinah.

As most of the people of Madinah had accepted Islam and the authority of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was generally accepted in the city and the surrounding area. But in spite of his popularity and influence he was not immune from dangers. There

were still two anti–Islam groups in existence in Madinah. One headed by Abdullah bin Ubai, had outwardly accepted Islam but inwardly they were against Islam. Abdullah bin Ubai was the leader of Khazraj tribe and was about to be crowned as a king with the collaboration of his hitherto rival tribe of Aus. But the acceptance of Islam by the over–whelming majority of these tribes and the arrival of the Prophet in the city had upset all his plans. This sudden development proved a death blow to the ambitions of Abdullah bin Ubai. He, therefore, to satisfy his hidden desire and to take revenge, thought it fit to come in the fold of Islam and undermine it from within. This group known as munafiqeen, (hypocrites) proved–during the later life of the Prophet and even after his death – a very disruptive element to the Muslim society. Rumour mongering and non-cooperation were the chief weapons of this group.

The second anti–Islam group was that of Jews. These Jews were people of scriptures and as has already been mentioned, were waiting for a prophet to come. These Jews were indirectly instrumental in showing the way of Islam to their heathen neighbours of Madinah. But though they showed the way of Islam to the people of Madinah they themselves lagged behind. Their argument to reject Islam was very ridiculous. They were expecting that the coming prophet will be from among them. And as the Prophet did not belong to them racially they refused to believe the authenticity of his Prophethood. They not only rejected Islam they also used to ridicule Islam and the Prophet. These Jews continuously argued and debated with the Prophet on the authenticity of his mission. All their arguments were answered one by one to the

satisfaction of all. But these Jews even then – with the exception of few noble souls who had accepted Islam – remained adamant. These Jews were very strong and influential and had fortified settlements around Madinah and their growing hostile attitude had exposed the nascent Muslim society to a new danger.

The Holy Prophet could not have remained silent spectator to the above two dangers raising their heads in Madinah. He ignored the hypocrites, as they were working under the garb of Islam. But to save Muslims from possible dangers from the Jews, the Prophet entered into agreement with them. Under this agreement the Jews got equal rights of citizenship and full religious liberty in return for their support of the new Islamic state in case of war. Thus the Jews were made equal partner in the new political set-up and all their possible fears of injustice and discrimination at the hands of Muslims were totally allayed. This agreement is considered as the first written political and constitutional document in the world. This agreement can also be called nucleus of the emerging Islamic state of Madinah.

While Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was busy in consolidating his position in Madinah; the Quraish of Makkah were hatching plans against the Muslims. They did not allow Muslims, even in Madinah, to live in peace. Islam was growing stronger and stronger. And this was what Makkahns could not tolerate. They established contact with anti–Muslim element of Madinah – hypocrites and the Jews. They even urged Abdullah bin Ubai the leader of the hypocrites in Madinah, either to kill the Prophet or expel him from the city. A contingent of the Makkah had also raided the suburbs of Madinah. In fact, due to the intrigues of

the hypocrites, the Jews and the Makkahns, situation in Madinah had become so tense that the Muslims used to sleep in the night taking their arms with them.

To forestall the ill designs of the enemies, the Holy Prophet sent several small expeditions out of Madinah. These are led by the Prophet himself or by some of the Muhajireens from Makkah. The purpose of these expeditions was reconnoitring and dissuading other tribes from siding with Quraish. They did not result in fighting however. Blood was shed and booty taken in only one of these early expeditions, and that too, against the Prophet's instructions. Muslims were not allowed till now to fight the enemy. But now they were allowed by Allah to "fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, but begin not hotilities. Lo! Allah loveth not aggressors."

(Qur'an, 2: 190)

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Chapter : 9

WAR COMES AT LAST

The Battle of Badr (2 A.H.)

Although there was an open conflict between Makkahns and the Muslims, it was the second year of Hijrah that the Makkahns got an opportunity to materialise their hideous designs to invade Madinah and obliterate Muslims from the world. The Makkahns were making continuous preparation for waging war against Muslims. They were sending caravan after caravan to Syria to finance the expenditure for their new campaign out of the profit of their sales. One such caravan was returning to Makkah from Syria. As its route passed from a point very close to Madinah, its leader Abu Sufyan, fearing an attack from Muslims sent a camel rider on to Makkah with a frantic appeal for help. On his appeal an army of one thousand men proceeded towards Madinah. When the Holy Prophet heard that a Makkahn's army is approaching Madinah he held a council of his followers and asked their advice whether they should intercept the caravan or proceed towards the Makkahns army. At last a decision was made to resist the Makkahns army. On this occasion, the Holy Prophet gave the Ansars, whose oath of allegiance had not included fighting outside Madinah, the choice of returning if they wished. But the Ansar did not agree to the suggestion and refused to forsake the Holy Prophet.

By this time the Makkahns trade caravan had reached Makkah safely. The Makkahns however, under the leadership of Abu Jehl continued their advance towards Madinah. The Holy Prophet too, with three hundred and thirteen of his followers, including Muhajir and Ansar advanced from Madinah and camped at Badr to give battle to the enemy. The Holy Prophet arranged the lines in battle-order but he himself did not take part in actual fighting. A shed was built for him near the battle-field, where he prayed Allah, the Almighty. And when the Makkahns' army advanced these words were on his lips:

"O Allah, if these few people are annihilated today, there will be no one to worship you till the dooms day."

Allah listened to his supplication and gave him the good tidings in these words: "The hosts will all be routed and will turn and flee" (Qur'an, 54:45). And the world saw the truth of these words within a few hours.

Soon a short but fierce battle took place on Ramadan 17, and the Makkahns were completely routed. Three of their greatest leaders, Abu Jehl, Utbah and Umayyah bin Khalaf were killed, and seventy men were taken as prisoners, including Prophet's uncle Abbas. These prisoners were distributed among the Muslims with instructions of good treatment and later on were set free on paying the ransom. Those who could read and write won their freedom by teaching reading and writing to Muslim children. As Abbas was closely related to the Prophet, someone suggested, out of respect to the Prophet, that he should be set free without paying any money. But the Prophet replied, "No. Abbas is a rich man, he should be made to pay double the amount."

The victory at Badr is a milestone in the history of Islam. Had the Muslims been defeated they might have disappeared from the earth, as feared by the Prophet a few hours before. The victory also encouraged Muslims and had a pacifying effect in and around Madinah. The opposing elements became weak and the surrounding tribes came under the influence of Islamic State.

The Battle of Uhud (3 A.H.)

The Quraish felt badly humiliated at their defeat at Badr. To avenge the defeat at Badr, they on a larger scale. And after one full year after the battle of Badr, they again set out for Madinah with three thousand men including two hundred horsemen. Seven hundred soldiers were in full armour. While the Muslims could muster only one thousand men, including one hundred with coats of chain–mail, and no horses. The number of Muslims was further decreased when 300 men belonging to hypocrite group refused to fight outside the city and deserted the Muslims at a critical moment. The Prophet, however, came out of Madinah with the rest of men to meet the Makkahns. The battle was fought near the mount of Uhud, about two miles nort of Madinah.

In the first rush of the battle Muslims defeated the Makkahns. But a serious mistake of Muslim archers turn the victory into a sort of defeat. These archers were ordered by the Prophet to guard a mountain pass and not to quit it in any circumstances. But when these archers saw that the Makkahns were defeated and are fleeing, leaving behind a large amount of booty, they too, fearing to lose their share of spoils, left the pass. Khalid bin Walid, the leader of Makkahn cavalry,

seeing the pass without guard, made a dash towards it and attacked the Muslims from behind. This unexpected attack turned the tables. Muslims were dispersed with great loss of life. The Holy Prophet too, was attacked. He was injured and lost two of his teeth. The non-believers made repeated attempt to reach the Prophet. But it was not an easy task. His devoted companions soon gathered around him to protect him from the fury of attackers. They demonstrated unparalleled courage and bravery to defend their leader. When the Prophet called them to protect him, six Ansar came forward and lost their lives one by one. Abu Dajana covered the Prophet with his body and received all the arrows on his back. Talha, took the blows of the sword on his hand with the ultimate loss of one hand.

The Prpohet himself remained calm and quiet; and instead of cursing the enemy prayed for them to God, saying:

"O God, forgive my people as they are ignorant and know not."

The Makkahns however, did not think it safe to push the matter too far; and they after a demonstration of victory, by raising slogans, left the field and marched off toward Makkah. Thus the battle of Uhud proved undecided. The Prophet sent a detachment of seventy Muslims to pursue the enemy. The Prophet himself advanced upto eight miles south of Madinah. Abu Sufyan, at this moment thought it better to return and complete the victory. But when he found that Muslims are again organised and ready to give a tough battle, he gave up his idea. However he proclaimed to come again next year.

The battle of Uhud proved a disaster for Muslims. Seventy Muslims were killed against 30 of the Makkahns. And perhaps this is the greatest loss of lives suffered by Muslims in any single battle during the lifetime of the Prophet. Among the slains were men like Hamza, the uncle of the Prophet and one of the greatest defenders of the Prophet in the early days of Islam; and Mus'ab bin Umair, who was mainly instrumental in converting the people of Madinah to Islam and teaching them Islamic tenets. In this battle the women of Quraish, who were brought with the army to encourage men by their presence, Mutiliated the dead bodies of Muslims, making necklaces and bracelets of dead men's ears and noses. Hindah; the wife of Abu Sufyan, plucked out the liver of Hamza and chewed it. When after the battle, the Prophet saw the condition of the slains, he was moved to vow reprisal. But soon he was relieved of his vow by a revelation from God, and mutilation of dead bodies was forbidden forever. However, so sad was this episode of mutilation of bodies, that when after about eight years the Holy Prophet passed through the battlefield of Uhud, tears started flowing from his eyes at these tragic events of the battle.

The confused situation of the battle had led to the rumour that the Prophet was killed. The effect of this rumour over the minds of the people of Madinah was very shocking. And here we see some very pathetic and impressive scenes of intensive love of the people with the Prophet. A Muslim was looking for a missing relative and found him severely injured and nearly dying. But when the dying man saw his relative he asked only about the Holy Prophet. When he was told

that the Prophet was safe, his face shone with delight and he said, "now I will die happily."

A woman from Ansar had her father, brother and husband killed in the battle. When she was informed of this tragedy she did not care at all and asked, "tell me first of all how is the Prophet?" And when she was told that the Prophet was safe, she went to see the Prophet from her own eyes; and when she saw him she said: "If you are alive all calamaties are nothing."

The battle of Uhud took place on sixth Shawwal 3 A.H. or January 625 A.D.

The Battle of Trench (5 A.H. or 627 A.D.)

The reverse, which Muslims suffered in the battle of Uhud, lowered the prestige of the Muslims with the Arab tribes. The tribes who had shown their inclinations towards the Muslims after the battle of Badr, now started drifting towards the Quraish. They even started attacking different small Muslim groups sent by the Prophet to pacify the people in the neighbourhood of Madinah.

The Jews despite their treaty with the Muslims, now hardly conceal their hostility. Their idea of a prophet was one who would give them dominion, and not the one who made the Jews who followed him, brother of every Arab. When they found that they could not use the Prophet for their own ends, they tried to shake his faith in his mission and to seduce his followers. They even went so far in flattery of Quraish as to declare the religion of the pagan Arabs superior to Islam. The Makkahns also incited the Jews of Madinah against the Muslims. The Jews now made common cause with Makkahns and broke the agreement with

the Muslims. The Prophet was thus forced to take strong action against two of their tribes. Bani Nazir and Bani Qaynuqa were expelled from Madinah. The Jewish tribes, after their expulsion from Madinah, joined the other Jewish tribes of the Oasis of Khaibar. Now a grand plan was hatched up to crush Muslims. The Jews and the Makkahns jointly incited all the tribes of Arabia to take arms against the Muslims. A force of ten thousand men was collected to march towards Madinah. At this critical moment, the remaining Jewish tribes of the city. Banu Quraizah, by breaking its agreement with the Prophet also joined the invading forces. As it was no possible to fight such a large force in the open field, the Prophet, on the advice of Salman Farsi, a companion of Persian origin, dug out a ditch around Madinah. The Holy Prophet here again, as usual took equal part with other Muslims in digging trench. When the invading army approached the city it found the ditch obstruction in its way into the city. The invaders, however, made several attempts to cross the ditch, but failed every time. The siege continued for about four weeks. At last continuous failures and increasing difficulties created distrust among the allies. And worst of all, on the 27th day of the siege a terrible cyclone with heavy rains worked havoc with the enemy. The invaders now decided to raise the siege and return to their homes. And one day the Muslims saw with satisfaction that all the invading hordes had gone away. This was the last and the greatest attempt of anti-Islam forces of Arabia to dislodge Islam from its bastion. And like the earlier ones this too utterly failed. Thus came to an end the series of aggressive wars started by the enemies of Islam five years ago. The faith, discipline,

determination, devotion and sacrifice of Muslims bore fruit. They were now not only safe but more confident of their future than ever before.

Now the Prophet turned towards Bani Quraizah, who were allies of Muslims but had joined hands with the invaders, creating a very critical situation for the Muslims. As Bani Quraizah could not stand alone against the Muslims, they requested to accept the decision of Sa'ad bin Muaz, a Muslim Ansar and their former ally. But the judge, upon whose favour they had counted, gave his verdict according to the Jewish scripture, the Torah, condemning their men to death and their women and children to slavery. Had the Jews left the decision on the Prophet, says an historian, "they might have been treated in a better way."

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Chapter : 10

THE TRUCE OF HUDAIBIYA AND EXPANSION OF ISLAM

Next year i.e. one year after the battle of the Trench, the Holy Prophet along with 1400 Muslims left Madinah for Makkah to perform Umra. As the purpose of the journey was purely religious, Muslims were instructed by the Prophet not to take any arm with them except swords. When Muslims came near Makkah, the Prophet sent words to the Makkahns that they had not come to fight with them, but to perform Umra. The Makkahns, however, did not allow Muslims to perform Umra (visiting Ka'abah in the days other than Haj). The Prophet after some negotiations however succeeded in persuading them to sign a truce. The truce provided.

(1) For ten years there were to be no hostilities between the parties.

(2) The Prophet was to return to Madinah, this year without visiting Ka'abah, but in the following year he might perform the pilgrimage with other Muslims.

(3) Deserters to the Muslims during the period of the truce were to be returned to Makkahns, but the deserters from the Muslims to the Makkahns were not to be returned.

(4) Any tribe or clan who wished to share in the treaty as allies of the Prophet might do so; and

any tribe or clan who wished to share in the treaty as allies of Quraish might do so.

The treaty was signed in Zuqad 6 A.H. (February, 628 A.D.) at a place called Hudaibiyah, 13 miles from Makkah. Hence it is known as the treaty or truce of Hudaibiyah. The terms of the truce apparently, were favourable to the Makkahns, and it was but natural that Muslims were not happy with the treaty. There was a general discontentment among them which was removed only after the revelation from Allah, about the truce of Hudaibiyah.

"Lo, We have given thee (O Muhammad) a signal victory, that Allah may forgive thee of thy sin that which is past and that which is to come, and may perfect His favour unto thee, and may guide thee on a right path, and that Allah may help thee with strong help." **(Qur'an, 48 : 1 to 3)**

The events which followed proved the truth of the Qur'an. Because of this truce Muslims got a respite. Muslims and non-Muslims availed this opportunity to meet and talk together freely. This free mixing did not have any bad effect on the Muslims, as they were men of convictions. But it led to a large scale conversion of non-Muslims to Islam. And it is said that during the two years which elapsed between the signing of the truce of Hudaibiyah and the fall of Makkah the number of converts was greater than the total number of all previous converts. "The Prophet", says a writer, "travelled to Hudaibiyah with 1400 men. Two years later, when the Makkahns broke the truce, he marched against them with an army of ten thousand", Khalid bin Walid, who was responsible for Muslims' defeat at Uhud, but later on earned the fame as an invincible Commander of Islam as well as Amr bin Aas, who

conquered Egypt for Islam, are prominent among the converts of this period.

Invitation of Islam to Foreign Rulers. (7 A.H.)

The Holy Prophet also availed the opportunity of truce to send his message to the rulers of different countries and invite them to enter the fold of Islam. Negus the king of Abyssinia embraced Islam. The Coptic governor of Egypt did not accept Islam but he received the Prophet's envoy courteously and sent presents to the Prophet. Heraclius, the Byzantine Emperor is also reported to have received the message favourably although he did not dare to accept Islam openly. It is said that Abu Sufyan, the leader of the Makkahns and so far the arch enemy of Islam, happened to be in the city when Prophet's letter was delivered to the Byzantine Emperor. The Emperor called for Abu Sufyan and talked to him about the prophet Muhammad (pbuh). The discourse which ensued is not only interesting but is also very valuable to understand the character of the Islamic message and its upholder.

The Emperor asked Abu Sufyan:

"Is the family of the claimant of the prophet-hood is respected and noble and has anyone else in his family also made such a claim?"

Abu Sufyan : The "family is noble and respected, and no one from his family has made such claim."

Emperor : "Has there been any king in the family?"

Abu sufyan : "No,"

Emperor : "The people who have accepted Islam are among weeks or among influential persons?"

Abu Sufyan : "Poor men, they are."

Emperor : "Are the followers of the prophet increasing in numbers or decreasing?"

Abu Sufyan : "They are increasing".

Emperor : Have you ever seen him speaking false?"

Abu Sufyan : "No."

Emperor : "Has he ever gone back to his words?"

Abu Syfyan : "Not so far, but let us see what he does in future."

Emperor : "What he teaches?"

Abu Sufyan : "he says, worship one God, observe prayer, be modest and chaste, speak truth and fulfil the obligations of relations and neighbours."

After this conversation the Emperor said to Abu Sufyan you have stated that the Prophet belongs to a respected and noble family, and it is a fact that prophets always belonged to good families. You have said that no one has ever claimed prophet-hood in the family, if it had been so I would have attribute his claim to this background; you acknowledge that there has been no king in the family, had it been so I would have felt that he wanted to become a king; you have confessed that he never tell lie, a man who does not speak lie with men how he can attribute lie with God; you have said that his followers are weak persons, the early followers of a prophet are always poor; you have admitted that the number of his followers is on the

increase, this is what happens with all true religions; you have said that he has not broken his words, prophets never broke words; you said that he commands for prayer and teaches modesty and chastity, if this is true he will certainly occupy the place where I am standing, "I was expecting a prophet but had not thought that he will be born in Arabia, if it had been possible for me to go there I would have washed his feet."

The Emperor however, did not dare to accept Islam openly. And after the above talk he asked the Muslim envoy to leave the court, without any positive reply.

The reaction of Khusro Parvez, the Emperor of Iran, to the letter of the Prophet was hostile. He got annoyed by the tone of the letter, which he considered insulting for an emperor, and tore the letter into pieces. When the Holy Prophet heard of this, he said, "Allah will rend as under his empire in the same manner." And only after a decade, the world witnessed the truth of the Prophet's words.

Conquest of Khaibar (7 A.H.)

The period of truce, however, was not a period of complete peace. It also witnessed some fighting, certainly not with the Makkahns, but with some other hostile people. One of them were Jews, who were as has been told before, bitterest and most dangerous enemies of Islam. Their strongest settlements were situated in Khaibar, about two hundred miles from Madinah. The Jews who were expelled from Madinah earlier had also settled in Khaibar. Thus a strong confederacy of the Jewish tribes, capable of bringing a large force in the field had come into existence in and

around the fertile oasis of Khaibar. These Jews of Khaibar had taken a leading part in inciting Arabs for the battle of Trench. Now with the help of neighbouring Arab tribes, they were planning to invade Madinah When the Holy Prophet came to know of their plan, he took initiative to forestall their design. He marched towards Khaibar with one thousand six hundred men including two hundred horsemen. When Muslims came near the oasis and cast their eyes on the buildings of the village they stopped for a while to let the Prophet pray for the opponents. The Prophet then prayed to Allah:

"Oh Allah, we wish prosperity and welfare for this village, for the inhabitants of this village, and we seek thy refuge from evils therefrom."[1]

There were six forts at Khaibar, all garrisoned with armed men. Considerable fighting took place around these forts, but the Muslims in a few days captured all of them one by one. Ninety three Jews and fifteen Muslims lost their lives in fighting. The Jewish power was now finally crushed in Arabia. The Jews were however, allowed to retain their lands on the condition that they would pay half of the produce to the Islamic State. Khaibar was the the first territory conquered by Muslims; and the significance of this campaign lies in the fact that it was in Khaibar that the non-Muslims for the first time became subject of the Islamic State. Until now relations between Muslims and non-Muslims were governed by mutual treaties.

The Prophet returned victorious to Madinah and in the same year he went to Makkah to perform Umra.

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[1] Sirat-un-Nabi by Shibli Nomani (Urdu), Part1, p.484.

The Battle of Mota (8 A.H.)

Another campaign of this period is of retaliatory nature. Among the rulers whom the Prophet had sent letters inviting them to Islam, one was Shurahbil bin Umar, the chief of Belqa, near the Syrian border. He was a Christian Arab and vassal of the Byzantine Empire. This man had committed a grave act of killing the Muslim envoy Harith bin Umair, sent by the Prophet with his letter. When the Prophet heard the news that his envoy had been killed he at once sent a contingent of three thousand troops to avenge the murder of Harith. The Muslim troops were under the command of Zaid bin Haritha, the former slave who was set free by the Prophet. When this army reached at Mota, now in present Jordan fifty miles north of the city of Man, they saw that a very large army of one hundred thousand men and reinforced by the Byzantine troops, was there to face Muslims. A fierce fighting took place in which three Muslim commanders including Zaid himself were killed one after another. At last Khalid bin Walid took the command in his hand. He fought so fiercely that seven swords were broken under his hands. He by his strategy and courage succeeded in withdrawing the remnant of the army in an organized way and returned to Madinah. This was the first great achievement of Khalid after he had accepted Islam. For his exemplary courage he was given the title of Saifullah (the Sword of Allah) by the Prophet.

"The campaign of Mota was unsuccessful except that it impressed the Syrian; with a notion of the reckless valour of the Muslims. The three thousand did not hesitate to join battle with a hundred thousand" says a historian. The field of Mota today has a mosque

with two tall minarets, marketing the grave of Jafar ibn-e-Abi Talib, the cousin of the Prophet and the second in command, in the campaign of Mota.

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Chapter : 11

THE QONQUEST OF MAKKAH

20 Ramadan (8 A.H.)

Muslims were growing stronger and stronger. Seven years ago, they had come as refugees in Madinah. But now they had established a formidable state. They had frustrated all the attempts of their enemies to annihilate them. By their sacrifices they had made themselves most deserving for survival. Islam was steadily making headway among Arabian tribes and its influence was increasing day by day. The power of the enemies of Islam was almost shattered, and their influence was now ostensibly on decline.

This was the state of affairs when the Makkahns unwisely announced that they would now no longer abide by the treaty of Hudaibiyah. Muslims were now powerful enough to strike back. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) decided to capture Makkah and eradicate all the traces of heathenism from the Ka'aba, the first House of Allah in this world. He, therefore, in the eighth year after Hijrah marched towards Makkah with his ten thousand devoted followers, fully armed; thus fulfilling the prediction of the Prophet Moses as quoted in the Bible:

The Lord came from Sinai.

And rose from Seir unto them;

He shined forth from mount Paran,

And he came from the ten thousands of holy ones. (Deuteronomy, 33:2)

On the tenth of Ramadan Muslim army camped at a place known as Marr al-Zahran, a few miles from Makkah. When Makkahns heard the news they sent their leader Abu Sufyan secretly to know the intentions of Muslims. He was, however, detected by the guards and presented before the Prophet. The Prophet did not punish him, but made him stand on a high ground to see the grand spectacle of Muslims marching towards the holy city. This was the occasion of intense rejoicings for the Muslims and the fulfilments of their dreams. But for Abu Sufyan it amounts to the death of his hopes and designs.

"Ten thousand Muslims then marched through the mountain valleys upon Makkah. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) divided his force into four columns. Abu Ubaida bin Jarrah led the Muhajireen and advanced directly on the town accompanied by the Prophet himself. On the left, Zubair bin Awam, moved in a parallel column. The western entrance to the city was committed to Sa'ad bin Ubadah, Shaikh of Kazraj tribe, while Khalid bin Walid with the Bedouin contingents was to circle the whole city on the west enter it from the south. The Prophet gave strict orders that no violence was to be used. His own tent was pitched on high ground immediately overlooking the town. Eight years before he had left Makkah under cover of darkness, and remained hidden three days in a cave on mount Thaur, which from his tent he could see rising beyond the city. Now ten thousand warriors were ready to obey his least command and his native town lay helpless at his feet."

Muslims were marching with slogans of Allah-o-Akbar (Allah is great). In the end came the contingent of Ansar.

"Who are these men asked Abu Sufyan?"

"They are Ansar", said Abbas, the uncle of the Prophet, who had accepted Islam and was escorting Abu Sufyan. When Sa'ad bin Ubada, leader of Ansar contingent passed by Abu Sufyan, with a flag lifting high in his hand, he shouted with a loud voice:

"This is the day of tough fighting. No sanctity of Ka'aba would be observed today."

When in the end the Holy Prophet passed from there, Abu Sufyan saw him and made complaint of the remarks of Sa'ad bin Ubada. Ideologically Sa'ad had made a mistake, because Ka'aba actually was not house of idols. It was house of Allah and only non-believers had turned it into a temple for idols. So the Holy Prophet correcting his remark said:

"Sa'ad bin Ubada was wrong, today is the day of establishing Ka'aba's real greatness."

The Prophet also announced that everyone who would surrender his arms or who would take refuge in the house of Abu Sufyan or would shut the doors of his house or would enter the precincts of Ka'aba, would not be interfered with.

In spite of all precautions, the peaceful entry of Muslims into Makkah was marred by the rashness of a group of the Makkahns who attacked the contingent under Khalid. As a result three Muslims and thirteen non-believers were killed. The Prophet however took Khalid to task. But when he was satisfied that his action was only in defence, the Prophet forgave Khalid, saying, "it was the Will of Allah."

The Prophet Muahmmad (pbuh) then entered the Ka'aba and cast down all idols with the following verses of the Qur'an on his lips:

"The truth is come and falsehood gone, verily falsehood is ever-vanishing". (Qur'an, 17:81)

After performing prayer inside the Ka'aba, the Prophet addressed the huge gathering. He said:

"There is no god, except Allah. No one can be associated with Him. He had fulfilled His promise, He has helped His servant and has shattered all bands Alone. All the prides, all vendettas, all the prices of blood of bygone days are under my feet. Oh? People of Quraish, Allah has obliterated the pride of the days of ignorance and the pride of the family. All the men are descendants of Adam, and Adam was made of clay".

The Prophet then recited these verses from the Holy Qur'an:

"O Mankind verily We have created you of a male and a female and We have made you nations and tribes that ye might know one another. Varily the noblest of you with Allah is the most Godfearing of you; verily Allah is knowing, Aware." (Qur'an, 49:13)

When he finished his speech he looked towards the gathering, among whom were also present his enemies and the people who had not lacked behind in inflicting harm to the Prophet and the Muslims. Addressing to these people the Prophet asked: "Do you know, how I am going to treat with you?"

"You are a noble brother and a noble nephew, we expect nothing but good from you", they replied.

"You are not revenged today, go you are all free", said the Prophet. Thus a General Amnesty was proclaimed.[1]

Such was the treatment of the Prophet with his enemies. In the words of Stanley Lane–Poole, "The day of Muhammad's (pbuh) greatest triumph over his enemies was also the day of his grandest victory over himself. He freely forgave the Koraysh all the years of sorrow and cruel scorn in which they had afflicted him and gave an amnesty to the whole population of Mekkah."[2]

He even did not dislodge Makkahn from the houses formely owned by Muslims and occupied by the Makkahns after Muslim's hijrah to Madinah.

As the time for prayer had come, Bilal, the same Abyssinian slave who was inhumanly treated and tortured on the streets of Makkah eight years ago, by his clarion call of Azan called Muslims to prayer. It was first time in Makkah that the Muslims bowed their heads before Allah in an atmosphere free from all kinds of fear.

Now the Holy Prophet summoned all the people of Makkah to swear loyalty. He sat on the Mount of Safa. The same place where 18 years ago he had addressed the Makkahns for the first time inviting them towards one God but none had listened to his call. Now men and women came one after the other, accepted Islam and swore loyalty to him. Each man striking his hand

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[1] Less than a dozen persons were excluded from amnesty, and even then only four were actually executed, and these also not for personal revenge but for other hideous acts.

[2] Stanely Lane-Poole: *The Speeches and Table-Talk of the Prophet Muhammad*, London 1882, Introduction, pp. 46-47 as quoted in Charm of Islam published by Begun Aisha Bawany Wakf,. Karachi.

against that of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as a pledge of loyalty. The women, on the contrary, instead of striking their hands against that of the Prophet, were asked to dip their hands in a cup full of water after the Prophet had dipped his hand. It was so because the Prophet never touched the hand of a woman other than his wife or very close relative. He also exhorted women to abstain from adultery and from infanticide. Among these women was Hind, the wife of Abu Sufyan, who had chewed the liver and the heart of Hamza the uncle of the Prophet, in the battle of Uhud. Instead of taking to flight, she veiled her face and joined the crowd of women and started talking with the Prophet in an unmannerly way. The Prophet recognized her and asked:

"Are you Hind?"

"Yes I am Hind", she answered boldly. But the Prophet did not get annoyed nor he took revenge of the ill-treatment of the body of his uncle. He only said:

"this is a day on which the past is forgotten; Allah has forgiven you."

In fact Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was never vindictive. There are innumerable instances that he had always forgiven his enemies. Take one more example. Akrama, the son of Abu Jehl, the bitterest enemy of Islam, had fled to Yemen out of fear, after the conquest of Makkah. He was then persuaded by his wife to accept Islam. When he came before the Prophet, such was the pleasure of accepting Islam by the son of the deadliest enemy of Islam, that when he saw Akrama coming towards him he came forward with such a haste that the shroud fell down from his shoulders.

Although the Prophet had himself been persecuted in the city and although many of his bitterest opponents were still living there, he won all hearts by his clemency on his day of triumph. Such generosity or statesmanship, was something un-usual for the Arabs, a race to whom revenge has always been dear. "His success" says J.B. Glubb, 'had been won by policy and diplomacy rather than military action. In an age of violence and blood-shed, he had realized that ideas are more powerful than force."[1]

The Prophet remained in Makkah for fifteen days He appointed Muaz bin Jabal, an Ansar to instruct the people of Makkah in the religion of Islam.

The Battle of Hunain (Shawwal 8 A.H.)

The Prophet was now about to leave Makkah that he was informed of the impending attack by the tribes of Taif and surrounding areas. These war-like tribes, who were good arrow shooters, had prepared a plan to make a sudden attack on Makkah. Informed of their plan the Prophet at once proceeded towards them, with a large army of twelve thousand men, including recent converts of Islam and about two thousand non-Mulsims of Makkah, who had accompanied as a allies. The battle took place in the field of Hunain, a place between Makkah and Taif and after a fierce fighting the attackers were defeated and took to flight. Muslims captured large booty and six thousand men were taken prisoners. It happened that Bani Sa'ad, the tribe in which prophet Muhammad (pbuh) had been suckled, were among the prisoners. An old woman was led upto him, claiming to Shima, the little foster-sister who had

[1] J.B. Glubb: The great Arab conquests, p.96.

carried the Prophet about as an infant sixty years before. To prove her identity, she pulled down the shirt off her skinny shoulder and showed a faint white mark. "That was where you bit me one day when I was carrying you back to the tent", she said to the Prophet. This reminiscence of the childhood days was so touching that the tears burst out of the eyes of the Prophet. As a mark of respect to her, he spread his own cloak on the ground and invited her to sit beside him to talk of old times with great affection. She was then allowed to go her home with gifts, on her own request. This act of generosity led to the freedom of other war prisoners taken by the Muslims of the tribe of Bani Sa'ad. "How can we make prisoners from the tribe among whom the Holy Prophet was suckled and brought up", they said.

Later, on the recommendation of the Prophet all the rest of the prisoners were also set free.

Hunain was the last important battle, which the Holy Prophet had to fight. The defeat of non-belivers in the field of Hunain completely crushed the Arab resistance to Islam. Now Islam had clearly emerged as the strongest force in the Arabian Peninsula.

The Prophet now returned to Madinah, which even after the conquest remained as his place of residence. Makkah was no doubt dear to him, but how could he leave Ansar, who had helped him in his most delicate moments, and with whom he had promised to live till his death; Addressing to the Ansar he said, "Others may go home with camels and sheeps, but you go home with God's Apostle. If all the world were to take one road and the Ansar another, I would go with the Ansar."

Although organised resistance to Islam by the Arab definitely came to an end after the battle of Hunain, a new danger was looming large on the northern horizon. Islam was gaining ground day by day. It has now become not only a popular religion of the country, but has also become an international movement and political force. A well-knit and solid state was now emerging in a land hitherto divided into tribal groups fighting each other. The Arab tribes and states, in the north, which were under the influence of the Byzantine Empire were not in good terms with the Muslims and had already been a clash between Muslims and these Arab chiefs, who were supported by the Byzantine army, in the field of Mota. The emergence of a strong power was perhaps considered by the Byzantine empire or its vassal Arabs as a great threat to their hegemony.

Now, when the Prophet reached Madinah, after the Conquest of Makkah, the news of a forthcoming big invasion of Madinah by the Byzantine troops was rampant in the city. This new danger was most formidable for the infant Islamic state. To fight one of the strongest power in the world was not an easy task. The Prophet, therefore, made all out preparations to meet this new challenge. Money, arms, camels, horses and food supplies were collected on an unprecedented scale. Almost every Muslim contributed his share, large or small, in this campaign. The history has recorded some bright examples of generosity and monitory sacrifices made by the companions of the Prophet for this campaign. For instance Umar had given half of his belongings to the Prophet, whereas Abu Bakr had offered almost all his assets. The distance was long, the season was hot and worst of all

it was harvest time. The Prophet, however, in spite of all handicaps succeeded in raising an army of thirty thousand men with ten thousand horses. Because of its large number, high moral and devotion to a cause the army was able to meet any force in the field, however strong that may be, with this large force the Prophet reached Tabuk, a place about two hundred miles north of Madinah and waited there for the enemy. The Byzantine Govt. Or its vassal states did not dare to come in conflict with such a large army and expected encounter did not take place. The campaign, however, proved very useful. The Prophet stayed at Tabuk for twenty days, sent a number of expeditions to the border areas bringing a number of Chirstian Arab tribes, hitherto under the influence of Byzantine, under the suzerainty of the Islamic State of Madinah. After this Prophet returned to Madinah triumphantly and was accorded a rousing welcome by the citizens. The small girls again received him with the old song, which they had sung nine years ago on the arrival of the Prophet in Madinah from Makkah.

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Chapter: 12

THE YEAR OF DEPUTATIONS

Soon after their return from Tabuk, Muslims performed Haj. The significance of this Haj lies in the fact that this was the first Haj, in which Islamic principles were strictly followed. The Prophet (pbuh) himself did not go to Makkah. He sent Abu Bakr as the leader of Muslim pilgrims. Abu Bakr, on the instructions of the Prophet taught people how to perform Haj according to Islamic teachings. Ali, another companion and a cousin of the Prophet announced certain prohibitions, such as: 'No mushrik (polytheist) would now be allowed to enter Ka'aba, no one would perform Haj with a naked body – a practice common in those days – and that all agreements with the polytheists would be considered null and void after four months from hence.[1]

The conquest of Makkah had greatly affected Arab tribes. Quraish were the most respected tribe in the whole Arabian Peninsula. The people of Arabia, When Makkah was subdued and the Quraish bowed their head before God Almighty, all the Arabs were more

[1] The proclamation is called as the Declaration of Immunity. Although Makkah had been conquered and its people were now Muslim, the official order of the pilgrimage had not been changed; the pagan Arabs performing it in their own manner, and the Muslims in their manner. It was only after the pilgrims' caravan had left Madinah in the 9th year of Hijrah that the Declaration of Immunity was revealed (see Qur'an, 9; 1-12). This proclamation marks the end of idol-worship in Arabia.

favourably disposed to accept Islam. The organised and violent opposition to Islam had come to an end; and there was now little danger of Muslim missionaries being killed. New missions were sent to all corners of the Arabian peninsula; to Yemen, Hadramaut, Bahrain, Najran, Aden, Najd and Oman. All these missions were given clear instructions by the Prophet, to observe certain principles. They were told to work gently, avoid hatred and to give people good tidings–tidings of eternal deliverance through Islam, religion of peace and submission to the will of God. The Prophet had also directed that when you meet people, invite them to have faith in one God and his Prophet; when they accept this, tell them that you are ordained to offer prayers five times in a day and night; tell them that you are ordained when they accept even this, you should explain them that Zakat is also obligatory and that this will be taken from your richmen and will be distributed among your own poors; and be aware that when they accept to pay Zakat you should avoid taking selected articles from them and you should be fearful of the supplications of the oppressed as there is no obstruction between them and Allah."

When the above instructions as their guide, these delegations or teams of preachers took the message of Allah to every nook and corner of Arabia. They were usually successful in their endeavour. When people accepted Islam, they were given instructions of Qur'an and Sunnah. Thus within two years after the conquest of Makkah the overwhelming majority of the people of Arabia had come under the fold of Islam.

A number of tribes, preferred to send their representatives to Madinah to see the Prophet from

their own eyes and to swear loyalty. There was continuous flow of such deputations towards Madinah from all parts of Arabia and most of these deputations accepted Islam. Those who did not accept Islam accepted the sovereignty of Islamic State. Because of exceptionally large number of these deputations the **ninth year of Hijra** is called the year of deputations.

The people of Taif, who had so bitterly opposed the Prophet and for whom the Prophet had prayed Allah, also sent a deputation to Madinah to accept Islam. The delegation offered to accept Islam conditionally. They requested permission for adultery, strong drinks and usury. As these were major crimes in the eyes of Islam, the request was refused. The deputation also insisted not to destroy their great idol the Lat. But this too was rejected. However it did not take long that all the people of Taif became Muslims. The idol was broken; and one of their chief, who had ten wives before Islam had to leave all except four, permitted by Islam.

The Prophet had become, in fact, the unchallenged ruler of Arabia, but his ways of life remained as simple as before. In this respect the story of accepting of Islam by Adi, the son of Hatim Tai celebrated for his generosity and the chief of the Tai tribe in Yemen, is very interesting. It is stated that when Muslims occupied Yemen, Adi fled to Syria. He was under the impression that Muhammad (pbuh) was not a prophet, but was a king. His sister was arrested and sent to Madinah, where she was received with care and respect and the Holy Prophet sent her back to her home in Yemen. She was so much impressed by the generous behaviour of the Prophet that she sent a

message to her brother and persuaded him to go to Madinah and see the Prophet for himself.

When Adi, in compliance of his sister's wish reached Madinah, the Prophet was sitting in the mosque. After a brief introduction, the Prophet stood up and taking Adi with him went to his house. They were still in the way that a woman came, stopped the Prophet and started talking with him on some subject. Adi, who himself was the chief of a tribe and had also seen the pomp and show of the Byzantine court, was very much impressed by this scene. When he saw the Prophet treating an ordinary old woman with respect and equality, he became convinced that Muhammad (pbuh) was not a king but a Prophet. On reaching home, the Prophet insisted Adi to sit on a leather cushion. Then they started talking in a free and frank atmosphere. And in the end Adi, convinced of the truth of the Prophet's mission, removed his cross and entered the fold of Islam.

Among these delegations one was from Najran, the biggest centre of Christianity in Arabia. Their leader along with priests were guests of the Prophet and they were allowed to pray in the Prophet's mosque. When the Prophet invited them to Islam they believed in God.

"No, as long as you worship cross and believe that Jesus was the son of Allah, how can you be Muslims", said the Prophet. When they did not agree to this, the Prophet invited them to a contest. "Let us bring", said the Prophet, "our kith and kin and pray to Allah that whoever among us is a liar curse of Allah may fall on him. The priests agreed to this; but when they saw next morning that the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) had reached the appointed place, along with his dearest

daughter and her two sons, Hasan and Husain, they hesitated to come out. One of them said, "We should not contest him, if he is a true prophet we will be doomed forever."

They, however, in spite of clear demonstration of the conviction of the Prophet on the veracity of his mission, did not accept Islam. They made peace by accepting an annual tribute. The Prophet granted to the Christians a charter, which forms one of the noblest monuments of enlightened tolerance. The charter runs as follows:

"To the Christians of Najran and the neighbouring territories the security of Allah and pledge of his Prophet are extended for their lives, their religion, and their property–to the present as well as the absent and others besides; there shall be no interference with (the practice of) their faith or their observances; nor any change in their rights of privileges; no bishop shall be removed from his bishopric; nor any monk from his monastery, nor any priest from his priesthood, and they shall continue to enjoy everything great and small as heretofore; no image or cross shall be destroyed; they shall not oppress or be oppressed; they shall not practice the rights of blood vengeance as in the days of ignorance, nor tithe shall be levied from them, nor shall they be required to furnish provision for the troops."

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Chapter: 13

THE RELIGION IS COMPLETED

Because of one reason or other, the Holy Prophet had not bee able to perform Haj so far. Now when peace was restored throughout Arabia, he decided in the 10th year of Hijrah to go to Makkah to perform Haj, one of the five pillars of Islam. When the news of Prophet's decision spread, the Muslims throughout the country started flocking towards Madinah, in order to have the honour to perform Haj in the company of their Prophet. It is said that about one hundred thousand Muslims had gone with the Prophet to perform this year's Haj, which is known as Hajjatul Wida or the last Haj.

The Holy Prophet amidst the multitude of his followers put on ahram for Haj and climbed on the camel and recited these words aloud:

> (Oh Allah, we are present before you; Oh Allah, there is no associate to you; we are present, praise be to thou and no one shares thy dominion.)

Thousands of people all around him repeated these words and the plains and the hills resounded with their echoes. What a noble and impressive scene was this. Only twenty–two years ago, when the Prophet had started his mission, even his relatives opposed him. He and his followers were subjected to every kind of atrocities and inhuman treatment. But now he was the ruler not only of Makkah and Madinah, but the whole of Arabia. He was temporal ruler as well as spiritual.

No ruler and no prophet was ever loved so much in the history by his people and followers as the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was.

It was during this Haj that the Surah entitled An-Nasr (Succour) was revealed, which the Prophet received as an announcement of approaching death. It says:

> "When Allah's succour and triumph cometh, and thou seest mankind entering the religion of Allah in troops, then hymn the praises of thy Lord, and seek forgiveness of Him. Lo! He is ever ready to show mercy."

When the Prophet reached Makkah, after a journey of nine days the children of his family, Banu Hashim came out of their houses to welcome him. The Prophet was so happy to see them that he had them sit on his camel in the front and on the back. The Ka'aba came in view. The Prophet looked toward it and said: "Allah may give more respect and regard to this House."

During the rites of Haj, the Prophet gave a sermon in the Plain of Arafat known as the sermon of the last Haj or the Farewell Address. This sermon was repeated with some additions during the next two or three days, particularly in the huge gathering at Mina on 10th Dhulhijjah. This farewell address is an important piece of Islamic teachings. The Holy Prophet sitting on the back of his camel said:

> "All praise be to Allah. We glorify Him and seek His help and pardon; and we turn to Him. We take refuge with Allah from the evils of ourselves and from the evil consequences of our deeds. There is none to lead him astray whom Allah guides aright, and there is none to guide him aright whom He leads astray. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah alone; having no

partner with Him, and I bear witness that Muhammad (pbuh) is his bondman and His messenger. I admonish you, O bondmen of Allah! To fear Allah and I urge you his obedience and I open the speech with that which is good.

Ye people! Listen to my words: I will deliver a message to you, for I know not whether, after this year, I shall ever be amongst you here again. O people; Verily your blood, your property and your honour are sacred and inviolable until you appear before your Lord, as this day and this month is sacred for all. Verily you will meet your Lord and you will be held answerable for your actions. Have I not conveyed the message? O Allah! Be my witness.

He who has any trust with him he should restore it to the person who deposited it with him.

Beware, no one committing a crime is responsible for it but himself. Neither the son is responsible for the crime of his father, nor the father is responsible for the crime of his son.

O people! Listen to my words and understand them. You must know that a Muslim is the brother of the Muslim and they form one brotherhood. Nothing of his brother is lawful for a Muslim except what he himself allows willingly. So you should not oppress one another. O Allah; have I not conveyed the message?

Behold! All practices of paganism and ignorance are now under my feet. The blood revenges of the Days of Ignorance are remitted. The first claim on blood I abolish is that of Ibne Rabi'ah Ibne Harith who was nursed in the tribe of Sa'ad and whom Hudhayl killed.

Usury is forbidden, but you will be entitled to recover your principal. Do not wrong and you shall not be wronged. Allah has decreed that there should be no

usury and I make a beginning by remitting the amount of interest which Abbas b. Abdul Muttalib has to receive. Verily it is remitted entirely.

O people! Fear Allah concerning women. Verily you have taken them on the security of Allah and have made their persons lawful unto you by words of Allah! Verily you have got certain rights over your women and your women have certain rights over you. It is incumbent upon them to honour their conjugal rights and not to commit acts of impropriety and are faithful to you, clothe and feed them suitably.

Behold! Lay injunctions upon women but kindly.

O people! Listen and obey though a mangled Abyssinian slave is your Amir (chief) if he excecutes (the ordinance of) the Book of Allah among you.

O people! Verily Allah has ordained to everyman the share of his inheritance. The child belongs to the marriage–bed and the violator of wedlock shall be stoned. He who attributes his ancestry to other than his father or claims his clientship to other than his masters, the curse of Allah, that of the angels, and of the people be upon him. Allah will accept from him neither repentance nor righteousness.

O people! Verily the Satan is disappointed at ever-worshipped in this land of yours, but if he can be obeyed in anything short of worship he will be pleased in matters you may be disposed to think of little account, so beware of him in your matters of religion.

Verily, I have left amongst you the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His apostle which if you hold fast, you shall never go astray."

"And if you were asked about me, what wanted you say?" They replied: "We bear witness that you have conveyed the message, and discharged your ministry."

The Holy Prophet addressed the assembly again on Friday, 10 Dhulhijjah and said:

"O people! Do you know what day it is, what territory it is, what month it is?"

To this the people answered; "The day is the day of sacrifice; and the territory is the sacred territory, the month is the sacred month. At each reply the Holy Prophet said:

"So I apprise you that your lives, your property and your honour must be as sacred to one another as this sacred day, in this sacred month, in this sacred town.

And your slaves! See that you feed them with such food as you eat yourselves; and clothe them with the cloths that you yourselves wear. And if they commit a fault which you are not inclined to forgive, then part with them for they are the servants of Allah and are not to be chastised.

Behold! Listen to me. Worship your Lord; offer prayers five times a day; observe fast in the month of Ramadan; make pilgrimage to the House (Ka'abah); pay readily the Zakat on your property and obey whatever I command you, only then you will get into the heaven.

Let him that is present convey it unto him who is absent. For happily, many people to whom the message is conveyed may be more mindful of it than the audience.

The Holy Prophet addressing the people next day also added:

"O people! Verily your Lord is one and your father is one. All of you belong to one ancestry of Adam and Adam was created out of clay. There is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab and for a non-Arab over an Arab; nor for white over the black nor for

the black over the white except in piety. Verily the noblest among you is he who is the most pious.

Behold, the nearer ones of you should convey the message to the remoter ones. I have conveyed the message."

Then looking up to the heaven, he said:

"O Lord! I have delivered the message and discharged my ministry."

"Yes, "cried all the people crowding round him, "Yes, verily you have."

"O Lord! I beseech thee bear Thou witness unto it."

And with these words, the Prophet concluded his address.[1] He alighted from his camel and performed the noon and afternoon prayers together. It was at this time, according to one narration, that the verse regarding the completion of religion was revealed to him. According to another narration it was revealed at the plain of Arafat, on 9th Dhulhijjah:

This day I have perfected for you your faith, and completed My favour upon you, and I am well-pleased with Islam as your religion. (Qur'an, 5:3)

The Holy Prophet after a few days' stay in Makkah, returned to Madinah by the end of the same month.

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[1] Abdul Hameed Siddiqui: *The Life of Muhammad,* pp. 361-366, Islamic Publications, Ltd, Lahore, 1969.

Chapter: 14

ISLAMIC SOCIETY OF MADINAH

It was in Madinah that Islam was completed and took the shape of a complete code of life – a code, which is an ideal one for all times to come. In Makkah it was faith in the unity of god and the day of judgement that was stressed. In Madinah it was society that was created on that basis. "The Hijrah makes a clear division in the story of the Prophetic Mission. Till then he had been a preacher only. Thenceforth he was the ruler of a State, at first very small one, which grew in ten years to the empire of Arabia. The kind of guidance which he and his people needed after the Hijrah was not the same as that which they had before needed. In Makkah Qur'an gave guidance to the individual soul and to the Prophet as warner; in Madinah it gave guidance to a growing social and political community, to the Prophet as example, lawgiver and reformer."[1]

All collective and social reforms introduced by the Prophet, therefore, mostly belong to the period of Madinah. New rules and regulations were framed and the people were given ideological training to mould every aspect of their life strictly within the framework of Islam. The first source of guidance was Qur'an –the book of Allah and second the Prophet himself. But the

[1] Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthal: Meaning of the Glorious Koran, pp. xv-xvi (Introduction).

Prophet did not introduce any new thing on his own part. He only expounded and interpreted the works of Allah under the guidance of Allah Himself. Here are some teachings of the Holy Qur'an:

> "And serve Allah. Ascribe nothing as partner unto Him. Show kindness unto parents, and unto near kindred, and orphans, and the needy and unto the neighbour who is of kin (unto you) and the neighbour who is not of kin, and the fellow traveller and the wayfarer and the slaves. Lo Allah loveth not such as are proud and boastful." (Qur'an, 4:36).
>
> "Whoso interveneth in good cause will have the reward thereof, and whoso interveneth in an evil cause will bear the consequence thereof." (Qur'an, 4:85)
>
> "And whoso committeth a delinquency or crime, then throweth the blame thereof upon the innocent, hath burdened himself with falsehood and a flagrant crime." (Qur'an, 4:112)
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> "O ye who believe. Be ye staunch in justice; witnesses for Allah, even though it be against yourself or your parents or your kindred, whether (the case be of) a rich man or a poor man, for Allah is nearer unto both." (Qur'an, 4:135)
>
> "It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces to the East and the West; but righteous is he who believeth in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the scripture and the Prophets; and giveth his wealth for love of Him, to the kinsfolk and to the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and to those who ask, and to set slaves free; and observeth proper worship and payeth poor-due. And those who keep their treaty when they make one, and the patient in tribulation and adversity and time of stress. Such are they who are sincere. Such are the God-fearing." (Qur'an, 2: 177)

These quotations are enough to show the spirit of Islamic ethics. But these are mere words if they are not

implemented. So the Prophet evolved a new social code which was helpful in creating an exemplary society. "Muhammad possessed", says Draper. "that combination of qualities which more than has decided the fate of empires – asserting that everlasting truth, he did not engage in vain metaphysics, but applied himself to improving the social condition of his people by regulations respecting personal cleanliness, sobriety, fasting and prayer."[1]

The Islamic society of Madinah was based on universal brotherhood and it did not recognize distinction on the basis of race and colour. It was also a classless society in the sense that it did not recognize distinction between rich and poor and was free of caste system. In Madinah every profession was considered honourable, provided it was not against the basic teachings of Islam. All men were considered equal to each other and the only distinction recognized was on the basis of one's noble character and good manners. Similarly mankind was divided into two groups – believers and non-believers as one community against that of Muslims. Muslims are considered as the most suitable community or group to spread peace, progress and justice on the earth. And the community created in Madinah, under the direct guidance of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was the best specimen for all time for the Muslims to follow.

Islamic society of Madinah did not recognize priesthood. The absence of a specially interested class to act as intermediaries between God and man differentiates Islam from all other creeds.

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[1] John William Draper: *A History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*, London, 1875. Vol. I, p.329.

In Madinah special emphasis was given to spiritual development, but men and women were not called upon to abandon the world to practice asceticism in order to attain heavenly life. The best man was he who fulfilled all his mundane obligations but did not violate Islamic sanctions.

The dignity of labour was recognised and the man who earned his living by hard work was better than one who does not work. The Holy Prophet actually discouraged begging. The Holy Prophet also abolished interest or usury from the economic life of Muslim community. Gambling, another common vice of the Arabs was also forbidden.

The Holy Prophet also introduced a new law of inheritance – most just the world has ever seen – giving due share to every deserving member of a deceased family.

In Madinah, there was no room for practicing celibacy. Marriage was declared to be an institution ordained for the protection of society and in order that human beings may guard themselves from foulness and unchastity. Adultery, therefore, in any form – with consent or no consent – was declared a great crime against society. Divorce was allowed but the act was pronounced by the Prophet to be most abominable in the sight of Allah.

To avoid adultery, strict restrictions were imposed on free mixing of both sexes. Veil–covering of face and body by women – was introduced as an effective instrument for this purpose. The veil does not signify the inferior status of women as some opponents of Islam try to prove. It was meant only as a barrier to stop free mixing of both sexes, which is the root cause

leading to adultery. Veil was in fact a stabilising factor in the family life.

Islam raised the status of women to that of men. In those days women were looked upon with contempt and had no equal right with men not only in Arabia but in the whole world. Islam raised their status morally as well as legally. Killing of girls which was in vogue in Arabia was declared a crime, an act of murder. "Women were given right to possess property and to enter a business independently. They got share in inheritance as daughter, mothers and wives. They were allowed to choose their husbands. They were allowed to take part in various fields of human activities; but it was emphasised that home was their main field of activities; and that women should not try to be looked in appearance like men and men should not try to be looked like women. Both sexes had respect of their own. No one was to consider himself or herself inferior to the other. But men being strong physically were given right to protect women folk and as such men were given supreme authority in the house.

Polygamy was recognised as lawful, as it was in all nations of antiquity, including Jews, Christians, and Brahmins; who were in the habit to take as many wives as they liked, without any limit. But the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) following the Quranic injuctions, restricted the number of wives to four and that too only when a man could deal with all wives with equity. Otherwise only one wife is preferred. "Polygamy", says an English writer, "embodies an aspect of Islam rarely appreciated in the West. The Muslim may each marry four wives, but extra marital familiarities must be punished with utmost severity. The West prides

itself on its monogamy, but winks at, or is amused by, innumerable minor or dalliance".[1]

Another great reform which was brought in Madinah by the Holy Prophet was about the institution of slavery. Slavery was in vogue in all countries of the world in those days. Under this system slaves were the most unfortunate section of the society. They had no right and were subject to all kinds of inhuman treatment. The Prophet did not declare this system as unlawful, but he put such restrictions on it that slaves actually became part of a family. No ill–treatment was allowed and they got right to sue against their masters if they were ill-treated. "Only persons taken in lawful warfare were permitted to be held in bondage. The emancipation of slaves was declare one of the highest acts of peity. In a word, human chattelhood is unknown in Islam; and the institution which is called 'slavery' in Europe and America[2] has no existence in

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[1] "The moral effect of the institution of polygamy on Muslim society as a whole can hardly be ignored: it has prevented the growth in Muslim countries unattained by foreign social ideas, of that class whose existence is an outrage on our humanity and a disgrace to civilization. Considering how the profession of the hetairal, honouured among some nations, despised among others, but tolerated by most, has flourished through all ages, it is no small credit to the Arabian teacher that it was so effectually stopped in Islam."(*Isalm* by Amir Ali, p.21)

[2] Following quotations from two English writers will show what position slaves held in a Muslim society even after twelve hundred years of the advent of Islam in a time when Muslims were much degenerated than the time of the Prophet. Richard Burton in a note in *Arabian Nights* says: "Everywhere in the Muslim East the slave holds himself superior to the menial freeman. A fact that I would impress upon the anti-slavery societies honest men, whose zeal mostly exceeds their knowledge." (A.C. Burns: *History of Nigeria*). "As a matter of fact there would not be much to say against slavery as it existed in North Nigeria at the beginning of British occupation, except that it was repugnant to our ideals." (A.C. Burns : History of Nigeria, London, 1948).

Muslim countries. In Islam parents were not to be separated from children, brothers from brothers, or one relation from another. They were to be fed and clothed like the masters and mistresses. Once emancipated they could inter marry with the master's sons and daughters. Al-though the system of Muhammad (pbuh) tolerated relations with bondswomen with far greater humanity it declared that the issue of such connections were legitimate, and that the bondswomen who bore children to her master was *ipso facto* emancipated; that thenceforth she was no more his bondswoman, but the mother of his child."[1]

Consequently the position of slaves in the Society of Madinah was quite opposite of what was their plight under the Romans, during the medieval Europe and most recently in Americas of nineteenth century. If slavery was not prohibited earlier in the Muslim world it was only because there was nothing in it that might incite reaction against the system. The emancipation movement of the last century in the West was largely the result of cruel and inhuman treatment of slaves for centuries by the Western nations.

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), did not only clean the hearts of the people, he at the same time, stressed equal importance to physical cleanliness also, which was first step to attain the purity of soul. The Prophet therefore declared that cleanliness of body is half the faith. Certain regulations were made to keep the body clean in all respect and at every time. Wearing of clean clothes and the use of perfume was particularly encouraged at the time of religious

[1] Syed Amir Ali: *Islam*, p. 22.

congregations. The Prophet also discouraged habit of spitting everywhere.

Like cleanliness, modesty and shyness was also declared as half of the faith by the Prophet. To go naked before others, even at the time of bathing was strictly prohibited. Women were asked to cover most of their body, and legs upto the ankles except face and hands.

Under the social code of Madinah, drinking of wine in every form, as well as its selling and buying was declared unlawful. Such was the faith of Muslims in their religion and their prophet that when wine was declared as prohibited, the people broke their vases of wine in their houses and the wine started flowing in the streets of Madinah like water. This was not short of miracle in a society in which drinking was considered a joy of life, like the modern Western world.

Laws were also framed about other foods and drinks. Eating of meat of certain animals and birds was forbidden. Likewise, to eat the meal of animals which were not duly slaughtered in the name of Allah was also prohibited.

Charity was given special emphasis in the social structure of the Islamic society. Zakat or the poor due was the back bone of the notion of charity and its implementation. Under this system every well to do man had to contribute a certain proportion of his wealth at the end of every year for the upkeep of the poor and distressed. Apart from Zakat, which is one of the five pillars of Islam, the Prophet created many more venues to give practical shape to the notion of charity, which under Islam is not only a favour but also an obligation and an act to purify one's soul. "In Islam", the Prophet said, "every good act is a charity."

All these rules and regulations governing the social life of Muslims were not enforced at one stroke. They were gradually introduced and took full ten years to take final shape. And what is important to remember is the fact that all these rules and regulations were not of transitory nature. They were made part and parcel of a Muslim's life for all times to come, because they were based on divine commandments and a part of religious duty and convictions.

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Chapter:15

THE ISLAMIC STATE OF MADINAH

Ten years of life in Madinah, described in previous pages, are apparently full of wars. The number of campaigns which the Prophet led in person during this period is 27, in nine of which there was hard fighting. The number of the expeditions which he planned and sent out under other leaders is 38. The number of battles, however, gives a wrong idea, if one thinks that the Madinite period was full of wars and lacked peace. In fact the days engaged in real fighting were few and can be counted on fingers. The total number of men killed on both sides in these wars did not exceed one thousand and two hundred. With so few days spent in actual fightings and so few casualties the Muslims were able to bring peace and order throughout the Arabian peninsula, a land mass comprising over one million square miles. Was this not a miraculous achievement? To quote a writer:

"In these ten years, the Prophet destroyed idolatry in Arabia; raised women from the status of a chattel to complete legal equality with men; effectually stopped the drunkenness and immorality which had till then disgraced the Arabs made men in love with faith, sincerity and honest dealing; transformed tribes who had been for centuries content with ignorance into a people with the greatest thirst for knowledge; and for

the first time in history made universal human brotherhood a fact and principle of common law."[1]

We have already described the Islamic society of Madinah. Now let us have a look into the state which was created by this society.

Islam is a complete code of life. It did not recognize difference between religion and state as both are dominated basically by the Qur'an and Sunnah – the conduct of the Prophet – the basic source of Islamic laws. The Qur'an says:

> "Ye are the best community that hath been raised up for mankind. Ye enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency; and ye believe in Allah." (3: 110).

It again says that:

> "Those who, if WE give power in the land, establish Salat and pay the poor–due and enjoin righteousness and forbid iniquity." (22:41).

And:

> "Allah hath promised such of you as believe and do good works that He will surely make them to succeed (the present rulers) in the earth." (24:55).
>
> "So judge between them by that which Allah hath revealed, and follow not their desires, but beware of them least they seduce thee from some part of that which Allah hath revealed unto thee" (5:49).
>
> "Lo! We reveal unto thee the Scripture with truth, that thou mayst judge between mankind by that which Allah showeth thee." (4:105)
>
> "Whoso judgeth not by that which hath revealed: such are disbelievers." (5:44)

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[1] Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall: *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*, pp. xxvi, (Introduction)

The above quotations from the Qur'an show that Islam has enjoined Muslims to establish not only a society based on Islam but also expects Muslims to establish a government based on Islam. In fact it has promised true believers to make them rulers on the earth. Indeed an ideal society, which Islam wants to establish is almost impossible in a state governed by un-Islamic rules. At the same time it is but natural that an Islamic society should lead to the establishment of state. So the establishment of an Islamic State in Madinah was quite logical.

In the beginning the State of Madinah was a city state; then it gradually expanded and in the end the whole Arabia came under its sway. The head of this state was the Prophet himself. And though it was a simple government – as it should be in a nomadic and materially undeveloped society – its aims and objects were clear and it furnished all the ideological foundations on which was raised the structure of a universal state after the demise of the Prophet.

The sovereignty in the Islamic State of Madinah belonged to Allah, and not to the people. But in spite of that it was not a despotic government. It was a truly democratic state. The people were free to act according to their wishes only subject to Divine laws. These Divine laws were meant to protect the society from the abuses of power by men and to save community from the prejudices and ill desires of persons, which is but natural in a society free of all bondage.

The rule of law was the essence of the Islamic State of Madinah. Even the Prophet was not above this law. The prophet himself had made it clear that the one of the causes of the decline of the Israelites was that they had started discrimination between privileged and

non-privileged people in their judgements. In the State of Madinah no one was to be punished without the judgement of the court.

Mutual consultation was another aspect of the state of Madinah. The Prophet in spite of Divine guidance was used to consult on difficult matters. There was great emphasis on the obedience of the ruler and the State. But here too, the Prophet had declared that there could be no obedience if the government went against the Divine laws.

The State of Madinah was a welfare state also. The income derived from various sources like Zakat, Khiraj, Ushr or Sadqah and Jizyah or poll tax, was spent on the welfare of the people. The public treasury, known as Bait-ul-Mal, was considered as a people's trust and the ruler was not allowed to use it indiscriminately according to his whim. It was a habit with the Prophet to distribute all the money or commodities, to the needy people as soon as it was received. In this respect he was particular to keep him or his family people in the last. Once he had refused to his beloved daughter Fatimah to give her a share from the revenue because he considered that other Muslims were more deserving than her. The Prophet disliked to keep money with him even for one night, without distributing it among the needy people. He used to say that if he would receive gold equal to a mountain he would spend it in the same day. The Holy Prophet believed that a government should be responsible to meet basic requirements of the people. "He who has no supporter, the government is his supporter", and that "I am responsible to pay the dues of one who dies without paying it." Are some of the principles laid down by him in this respect.

About Zakat, the Prophet had made it clear that it would be received from among the wealthy people of the community and would be distributed among the needy people of the community. It is a cardinal principle of Islam that "wealth should not remain confined only among wealthy people" (49:7)

The judicial system of the State of Madinah was all embracing. The Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet had laid down rules and regulations to deal with civil and criminal cases. Murder, adultery, false accusation, theft, wine–drinking were all punishable crimes. In Madinah, the Prophet himself used to decide all cases but in the far flung areas his magistrates were responsible for the judgements. All the cases were decided strictly according to the injunctions laid down by the Qur'an and the Prophet. The judges were, however, free to act according to their own discretion if they found no direction or instance in the Qur'an or Sunnah. Justice was strictly maintained when deciding the cases. No discrimination of any kind was allowed. The Prophet had emphasised strict justice on different occasions. He had warned that the communities or peoples of bygone days were ruined only because they were used to punish people of lower strata according to the law but let the people of higher strata escape from the punishment. "By God", he said, "if Muhammad's (pbuh) daughter Fatimah had committed theft I must have cut her hands." The Prophet had however made it a principle that to commit a mistake in forgiving a person is better than to commit a mistake in punishing him.

During the lifetime of the Prophet the army was not organized on regular lines. All Muslims serve as volunteers at the time of need. But there was much

stress on keeping horses and arms ready to be used at the given time. The Prophet (pbuh) urged Muslims to hold training exercises particularly horse racing and archery. But what Muslims lacked in military art and weapons was more than compensated by religious zeal. It was this religious enthusiasm and zeal which was responsible for the defeat of Byzantine and Sassanide empires at the hands of Muslims within ten years of the Prophet's death.

And it was the same spirit that created some of the most brilliant military commanders, the world had ever seen, during the next two decades after the Prophet. All these generals were companions of the Prophet.

War laws of the Islamic State of Madinah were humane. Agreements were strictly observed, prisioners were not allowed to be killed. All old men, women and children were to be protected at all costs. Religious leaders were given protection even during the war. If prisoners were not exchanged they were taken as slaves; but there was strict order to treat these slaves as members of one's family. Rape, looting and destruction of non-military properties were strictly prohibited.

One noble aspect of war in Islam, which is called *jihad*, was that war was not allowed for the purpose of land aggrandisement. It was allowed for the sake of self–defence or for some noble cause beneficial for the mankind. In such cases *jihad* was a sacred duty and to die in fighting was declared a great act of piety. Paradise is promised for those who die in the way of Allah. Murder or killing in other cases was declared as one of the most heinous crimes.

Islamic State of Madinah was one of the most tolerant state, free of religious bigotry. The use of

force for the conversion of non-Muslims were prohibited. All non-Muslim subjects were allowed complete religious and social freedom. They were, however, required to pay poll–tax or jizya, in lieu of military service, from which they were exempted. The notion that jihad is a war of converting non-Muslims to Islam is far from truth and utter misrepresentation of Islam. *Jihad* was waged only to defend oppressed or to gain political privileges it was only as an alternative for war. After gaining victory none was asked to accept Islam. Even prisoners were not forced to accept Islam.

The political and administrative structure or set-up of the Islamic State of Madinah was very simple. There were no administrative departments or offices. The Head of the State was the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) himself and governors or Ummal were appointed by him to look after the State affairs in different parts of the country. The sources of income were Zakat, Ushr, Khiraj, Jizya and money received as Sadqa or charity. Zakat was levied on cash, trade goods and ornaments and Ushr on agricultural products.

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Chapter: 16

PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PBUH)
A Model of Human character

In the preceding pages we have read about the ideological conflict and the role of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) at all levels – religious, social and political – in this conflict in detail. This role, however, was confined to his collective duties. Now let us have a look into the personal life of the Messenger of Islam (pbuh).

The life of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) holds a key position in the teachings of Islam. The Qur'an has clearly stated:

> "Verily in the messenger of Allah ye have a good example." (33:22)

His life, therefore, has not only been a source of inspiration but is also a model for Muslims, in order to mould their lives according to his life.

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) had, therefore, laid open all aspects of his life to the people to see that there is no duality or contrast in his character, and that he does the same what he says to others. Even his wives had injunctions not to hide anything even from the private life of their husband.

Who can be a better judge for a man than the members of his own family? Members of a family know each other intimately. One's mistake or an evil spot can remain hidden from others' eyes, but it cannot

remain hidden from the eyes of the close relatives. Voltair was right when he said that "No one can be a hero of his family. But as to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), it was quite opposite. He was not only a hero of his people but was also a hero of his family. It was his wife, who first of all became convinced of his mission; and it was again his wife, the youngest one, Ayesha who was one of the most devoted admirer of the virtues and the sterling qualities of the character of her husband. When after the Prophet's death people asked her about the manners and the life of the Prophet, she replied: "Have you not read Qur'an? His life was completely in accordance with the Qur'an."

In fact the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) spent all his life strictly in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Qur'an. He had followed the words of Allah in letter and spirit, and thus had made himself an embodiment of the teachings of the Qur'an–a Qur'an indeed in the shape of flesh and blood. So Ayesha was not wrong when she said that his life was completely in accordance with the Qur'an.

The main emphasis of the Qur'an is on the belief in one God and the life after death.

"We all belong to Allah and to Him shall we return", says the Qur'an.

The Holy Prophet made demonstration of his belief by his very actions–by not indulging in the luxuries of life or even having normal worldly comforts. In spite of the fact that he had become ruler of the whole Arabia, he led a very simple life. His food, his dress, his house and his other belongings were most simple and ordinary. Instead of rugs and carpets, he used to sit and sleep on ordinary mattress or

cotton cloak. He never hesitated from sleeping on a bare cot, having no beddings.

Once some of his companions came to see him and they were greatly shocked when they saw marks of cot strings on his body, which were the result of his sleeping on the cot without bedding.

"Oh Prophet of Allah, we want to offer you soft bedding", they said to the Prophet.

But the Prophet replied:

"I have nothing to do with the life of this world. I am related to this world only as much as a traveler who takes a little rest under the shadow of a tree and then proceeds along."

This reply shows that the hardship and stuffering which he was undergoing was not because he could not afford a luxurious life, but was only because he was convinced that the life of this world is not a real one but a transitory one. What is eternal and meaningful, is the life after death.

The Prophet had inculcated the same spirit in his family also. For instance, when he saw his dearest wife Ayesha wearing bracelets in her hands, he said, "It is not a good thing for the wife of Muhammad" (pbuh), and then he asked her to take them off. The Prophet was used to say that "it is enough for a man to take only as much provision as is required by a traveler for his journey."

On another occasion when he saw daughter Fatimah wearing a golden necklace–which was given to her by her husband – the Prophet did not like it and said "Oh Fatimah, do you want men to say that the daughter of Muhammad (pbuh) is putting on a necklace of fire around her neck?" The virtuous and

obedient daughter, hearing this admonishment of his father not only took off the necklace instantly but also sold it out, and with the money she received she freed a slave.

It must be borne in mind here that Islam allows its followers to lead a comfortable life and enjoy it in a healthy way. But the Prophet himself did not take advantage of this permission. He, on the other hand, had deprived himself of all luxuries and worldly comforts cheerfully and had deliberately chosen for himself a life of hardship only to please his Lord – Allah.

His house too was not a palatial building. It was adjacent to the Mosque and was not more than a collection of hutments. It contained nine rooms each for one wife. There was no verandah or courtyard and each room was about ten feet square. The walls were made of earth and the roof was of date trees' branches and leaves. These rooms were without any decoration and when once Ayesha covered the walls with coloured cloth he got annoyed and said, "We are given money not to decorate brick and stone."

He had no servants of work for him. But three of his followers and companions – Abdullah bin Masood, Bilal the negro and Anas bin Malik (Allah be pleased with them) had voluntarily devoted themselves to work for him. All these three hold great respect and honour in the Islamic history.

His dress was extremely simple and consisted of a shirt, a cloak, a tehmad (a sheet of cloth or trouser) – all made of ordinary cloth – a turban as a headgear and a pair of sandals. He never felt shy of wearing mended clothes. He even mended his clothes and shoes by his own hands. His garments were always clean and he

used perfume profusely. He did not like even other men to wear dirty clothes.

Like his dress and house, his food was also simple. Milk and date was his main diet, although he liked to drink cold water.

The propherty which he left after his death was nothing except a donkey on which he used to ride, few weapons and a few gardens which he had endowed for the benefits of all Muslims.

"The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was of middle height, rather thin but broad of shoulder. Dark hair, slightly curled, flowed in a dense mass almost to his shoulders. His face was oval shaped. Great black restless eyes shone out from under long heavy eyelashes. His nose was large, slightly acquiline. His teeth were well set, white. A full beard framed his manly face. His skin was clear and soft and his complexion red and white.[1]

When Abdullah bin Salam, a Jew saw him first he said:

"By God: this cannot be the face of a liar."

As to the manners and character of the Holy Prophet the Qur'an says:

And thou (standest) on an exalted standard of character. (68:4)

The humility of spirit, the nobility of soul, austerity of conduct and stern devotion to duty formed the distinguishing traits of his character. Whilst the virtual ruler of Arabia, he visited the sick, followed any bier he met, accepted the invitation of the lowliest,

[1] Stanley Lane–Poole: *The Speeches and Table –Talk of the Prophet Muhammad as quoted in Charm of Islam*, published by Begum Aisha Bawani Wakf, Karachi, 1960.

mended his own clothes, milked his goats and worked for himself.

He never first drew his hand out of another's clasp and turned not before the other had turned. His hand was the most generous, his breast the most courageous, his tongue the most truthful; those who saw him were filled with reverence, those who came near him loved him. Modesty and kindness, patience, self–denial and generosity pervaded his conduct and riveted the affections of all around him. With the bereaved and afflicted he sympathised tenderly. He would stop in the streets listening to the sorrows of the humblest. He would go to the houses of the lowliest to console the stricken and comfort the heart broken. He was brave, although he did not kill anyone from his own hand except one Ubai bin Khalalf in the battle of Uhd, who had attacked him. He, however, never lost heart even on most unfavourable situations. He was generous, although he had no wealth; he would remain hungry throughout the night but would not refuse to give the only food he had, to a needy person.

It was his routine to sit in the mosque after the morning prayer and to spend few hours in educating the people, settling their disputes administering justice, receiving envoys and dictating despatches. Then he would stood up for Chasht prayer, at the middle hour between sunrise and the meridian; and after it he would go to his house; where he would spent his time in household duties, sewing his own clothes, mending his shoes, milking the sheep etc. After the prayer of Asr (afternoon) he would visit all his wives one by one and then would spend night with one of his wives. All his wives would gather there and talk to him till the Isha (night) prayer discussing and talking. He would

sleep after Isha and then would awake at mid-night to offer Tahajjud prayer. Indeed he would spend most time of the night in prayer and supplications. This was his regular habit throughout his life and sometimes, due to continuous standing in the prayer his legs got swollen.

This was the short description of the character of the Holy Prophet. A character which had rightly attractd the attention of his followers, who in their turn tried to follow him in letter and spirit. Thus a team consisting of thousands of men and women, well trained and disciplined, came into existence, everyone of which was a model of human character.

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Chapter : 17

THE HOLY PROPHET PASSES AWAY

After performing Haj, barely two months have passed that the Holy Prophet fell ill. The stress and strain of 25 years incessant struggle was now telling on his health. The poison given to him some years before by a Jew in Khaibar was also undermining his body. He had already received indication of his approaching death as has been mentioned earlier in this book.

Four days before his illness he had also stated the following injunctions as his last will:

"Earlier nations", he said, "had made the graves of the Prophets and saints a place of worship. Beware you should not do this. I forbid you from this." He also said that "What is halal (allowed) and haram (forbidden) should not be attributed to me. I have allowed only that which has been allowed in the Book of Allah, and I have forbidden only that which has been forbidden by Allah" "Oh Fatimah" the daughter of the Prophet and Oh Safia, the aunt of the Prophet, do something for Allah, I cannot save you from His punishment.

The Prophet remained ill for a period of 21 days He, however, maintained his usual calmness and serenity of mind up to the last; and officiated at the public prayers until within three days of his death. The last time he appeared at the public prayer amidst the tears and sobs of the people. He recommended to all the observance of religious duties and practice of

peace and good–will. He implored Allah's mercy for all those present, and all who had fallen in the persecution of their enemies. When the Prophet (pbuh) became unable to lead the prayer the duty was performed, on the instruction of the Prophet, by Abu Bakr, his closest friend and a prominent follower. During the last three days the Prophet was very uneasy, In this state he remembered that there were some gold coins in his house. Ayesha on the instruction of his husband gave these coins to some needy person.

Last day the Prophet was feeling very uneasy. He would get unconscious for some moments and then would regain consciousness. This agony of the father was unbearable for Fatimah.

"How uneasy is my father", words came out of her mouth in a state of anxiety.

"Your father will never be uneasy after this day", the Prophet said in reply.

In the after-noon the people felt that his breath was disturbed. His lips were moving, as if he was saying something. After close attention these words were heard: "Prayer and slaves, prayer and slaves." A vase of water was at his bedside. He was repeatedly dipping his hand in it and washing his face. Sometime he would cover his face with the clock and then would remove it the other moment. In this condition he raised his hand and with a finger pointing towards the sky he said:

"No one is needed now except that friend (Allah).

And the other moment he had breathed his last. The day was Monday, 12 Rabi-ul-Awwal, 11A.H. (June 1, 632 A.D.)

When news of Prophet's demise spread, people in Madinah became very much grieved. Umar, one of his strongest companion was quite upset and he threatened those who spread the rumour with dire punishment, declaring it a crime to think that the messenger of Allah could die. He was storming at the people in that strain when Abu Bakr came into the mosque and overheard him. Abu Bakr went to the chamber of his daughter Ayesha, where the Prophet lay. Having ascertained the fact he kissed the forehead of the Prophet and went back into the mosque. There he announced the death of the Prophet in these words.

> "Oh people, Lo, as for him who used to worship Muhammad (pbuh), Muhammad (pbuh) is dead. But for him who used to worship Allah, Allah is alive and dieth not."

The Prophet was then given last bath and was laid to rest in the same room in which he passed away – the room of Ayesha, adjacent to the Prophet's mosque. A green dome was later on constructed on this room. He was buried there, lest people may not make his grave a place of worship, if he was buried in an open field.

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Chapter : 18

THE GREATNESS OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PBUH)

What the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) achieved in his lifetime against heavy odds, and the change which he brought in the lives of the Arabs, is no short of a miracle. But the impact of his reforms and teachings did not remain confined to the borders of Arabia. It spread far and wide in all directions after him. The Holy Prophet had not only brought a political and social change, he had also brought a revolution in thoughts. Within a century after the death of the Prophet of Islam all the lands which are considered as the cradle of civilization had adopted his religion. The progress continued and is till continuing. And today about one fifth of the world is the follower of Muhammad (peace be upon him).

The Holy Prophet had not brought only a political and social change. He had also brought a revolution in thoughts. His teachings were universal and all embracing. His vision penetrated every aspect of life and there is nothing which he touches and does not adorn. His orders and commandments covered a vast field from regulation of international relations down to the habits of every day life. On the foundations of his injunctions his followers, after him, established a civilization and a culture which is unique, and which has greatly affected the world down to our own times.

The credit of all this goes to no other man than Muhammad (pbuh), the messenger of Allah. Even non-Muslims have paid glowing tributes to his greatness and to his achievements. Here we will like to quote some of the Western writers:

"If" says Lamartine, "greatness of purpose, smallness of means, and astounding results are the three criteria of human genius, who could dare to compare any great man in modern history with Muhammad (pbuh)? The most famous men created arms, laws and empires only. They founded if anything at all, no more than material powers which often crumbled away before their eyes. This man moved not only armies, legislations, empires, peoples and dynasties but millions of men in one-third of the inhabited world, and more than that he moved the atlars, the gods, the religions, the ideas, the beliefs and the souls. On the basis of a book, every letter of which has become law, he created a spiritual nationality which blended together peoples of every tongue and of every race."[1]

"By the force of extraordinary personality" says James. A Michener. "Muhammad (pbuh) revolutionised life in Arabia and throughout the East. With his own hands he smashed ancient idols and established a religion dedicated to one God. He lifted women from the bondage in which desert custom held them and preached general social justice."[2]

"Muhammad (pbuh) succeeded in fastening upon his people, and extending throughout the Middle East, a broader, cleaner, fresher, more vigorous political and

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[1] Lamartine: *Histories de la Turquie*: Paris, 1854, Vol. 11, pp. 276-277.
[2] James A. Michener, 'Islam : The Misunderstood Religion" in *Reader's Digest*, May 1955 (American edition)

social ideal than that of the decadent Byzantine Empire."[1]

Now let us finish this chapter with the following assessment of the greatness of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) by one of his modern followers:

"In the cavalcade of world history the sublime figure of this wonderful person towers so high above all the great men of all times who are famous as heroes of nations, that they appear to be dwarfs when contrasted with him. None of them possesses a genius capable of making any deep impression on more than one or two aspects of human life. Some are the exponents of theories and ideas but are deficient in practical action. Some others are men of action but suffer from paucity of knowledge. Some are renowned as statesmen only, others are masters of strategy and manoeuvring. Some have concentrated on one aspect of social life in a manner that other aspects have been over-looked. Soms others have devoted their energies to ethical and spiritual verities but have ignored economics and politics. Some others have taken to economics and politics, but neglect morals and the spiritual side of life. In short, one comes across heroes who are adepts and experts in one walk of life only. He (Muhammad (pbuh) is the only example where all the excellences have been blended into one personality. He is a philosopher and a seer and also a living embodiment of his own teachings. He is a great statesman as well as a military genius. He is a legislator and also a teacher of morals. He is a spiritual luminary as well as a religious guide.[2] Those whom

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[1] A. C. Bouquet : *Comparative Religion* (Penguin Books, 1954 pp. 269-270)

[2] Syed Abul A'la Maudoodi : Towards Understanding Islam, pp.72, 73

people style as makers of history are only creatures of history. In fact, in the whole history of mankind, he is a the unique example of a maker of History?[1]

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[1] Ibid. p. 75.

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

Birth of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) 571 A.D. (9 Rabi I)

Death of Aamina (Prophet's mother) at the age of 6).

Death of Abdul Muttalib (grandfather 578 A.D. (when the Prophet was 8 years old)

Prophet's first journey to Syria at the age of 12 Half-al-Fuzaul (at the age of 16)

Prophet's second journey to Syria at the age of 23/24

Prophet marriage with Khadija (595A.D.)

Prophet settles the dispute on the question of putting the Black Stone in its place. (age 35)

Prophet's vision of angel Gabriel 610 A.D.
(Feb. 12 (9 Rai I)

Beginning of the revelation of Qur'an 610 A.D.
(August 17) (18 Ramadan)

Beginning of the public preaching (613 A.D.)

Emigration to Abyssinia by a group of Muslims
(615 A.D.) (Rajab)

Hamza and Umar accept Islam 616 A.D. (Rajab)

Internment in the pass of Abu Talib
(617-619 A.D.) (Rajab)

Death of Abu Talib and Khadija (619 A.D.) (Rajab)

Miraj (5 time prayers enjoined) (620 A.D. Rajab 27)

Journey to Taif (month of Shawwal) (620 A.D.)

First pledge of Aqba (Zulhijja) (621 A.D.)
Second pledge of Aqba (Zulhijja) (622 A.D.)
Prophet's migration to Madinah:
Departure to Makkah (27 safar) 622
Departure from the cave of Thaur
(1 Rabi I) (622 Sep. 16)
Arrival at Qaba (8 Rabi I)(622 Sep. 23)
Arrival at Madinah (12 or 22 Rabi I) 622
Foundation of the Prophet's mosque (Rabi I) 1 A.H.
Agreement with Madinites and Jews (1 A.H.)
(World's first constitution)
Azan introduced and Zakat enjoined (2A.H.)
Jihad allowed (2 A.H.)
Change of Qibla (Shaban 15) (2 A.H.)
Fasting ejoined (Ramadan) (2 A.H.)
Expulsion of Banu Qainuqah
(Shawwal or Zuqada) (2 A.H.)
Battle of Badr (Ramadan 17) (624 A.D.) (2 A.H.)
Battle of Uhud (6 Shawwal, January 625 A.D.)
(3 A.H.)
Law of inheritance introduced (3 A.H.)
Family laws (first instalment) introduced (3 A.H.)
Action against Banu Nuzair (4 A.H.)
Veil introduced (Zuqada 1) (4 A.H.)
Drinking of wine prohibited (4 A.H.)
Battle of Trench (Shawwal and Zuqada,
Feb. 627 A.D.) (5 A.H.)
Action against Banu Quraiza (Zulhijja) (5 A.H.)
Treaty of hudaibiyah (Zuqada, Feb. 628 A.D.) (6 A.H.)

Khalid and Amr accept Islam	(6 A.H.)
Letters to the kings, inviting to Islam (Muharram)	(7 A.H.)
Campaign against Khaibar	(7 A.H.)
Family laws (second instalment)	(7 A.H.)
First Haj performed by Muslims (February 629 A.D.)	(7 A.H.)
Battle of Mota (Jumada I, Sept. 629 A.D.)	(8 A.H.)
Conquest of Makkah (Ramadan 20, January 630 A.D.)	(8 A.H.)
Battle of Hunain (Shawwal, 630A.D.)	(8 A.H.)
Usury prohibited	(8 A.H.)
Expedition to Tabuk (Rajab, November 630 A.D.)	(9 A.H.)
Jizya (poll tax) introduced	(9 A.H.)
First Haj after Makkah is liberated	(9 A.H.)
Declaration of immunity (10 Rabi I)	(10 A.H.)
The sermon of the last Haj by the Prophet (Zulhijja 9)	(10 A.H.)
Usama ordered by the Prophet to proceed Towards north with his contingent (Safar 26, 632 A.D.)	(11 A.H.)
Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) passes away (Rabi 12, June 632 A.D.)	(11 A.H.)